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THE BORDER AVENGERS.

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THE SILENT SLAYER.

BY W. J. HAMILTON



As the morning came more brightly, he saw the object of his search. The canoe had been drawn high up on the beach, and its former occupant was standing on a headland looking across the lake. It was an Indian, of gigantic stature, in the war-dress of a chief. That noble and imposing figure Wilton had once seen, and, once seen, he could never forget it. He remembered, upon one occasion, being in Montreal, of seeing him, and Despard, the spy, had told him that this was Wenona, the "Giant Chief of St. Regis."





THE
BORDER AVENGERS;

OR,

THE WHITE PROPHETESS OF THE DELAWARES.

BY EDWARD WILLETT,

Author of the following Dime Novels:

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| 110. THE HIDDEN HOME. | 132. OLD HONESTY. |
| 114. NED STARLING. | 139. THE BORDER FOES. |
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| 125. THE HUNTED LIFE. | 149. THE HUNTER'S PLEDGE. |
| 159. SNOW BIRD. | |
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THE

BORDER A NEW YORK

THE WHITE PROTESTS OF THE DEAN

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THE BORDER AVENGERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE END OF A JOURNEY.

IT was about the middle of the afternoon, in the early part of the month of September, near a hundred years ago, that three travelers rode up to a log-cabin in north-western Virginia, not far from the spot where the city of Wheeling now stands.

These travelers were quite different in appearance from the backwoods settlers who were sparsely scattered through that region, and may be described as a gentleman with his wife and daughter.

The gentleman was somewhat past the prime of life, but was tall and fine-looking, with the well-bred air of one whose life had been spent among the refinements of civilized society. His wife was still a handsome woman, whose appearance and manners indicated that she had not been accustomed to the roughness and wildness of border life. The daughter was a girl, or young lady, of about fifteen years of age, and was as beautiful as any wild thing that could exist amid the wild scenery by which she was surrounded. Her curling light hair, her large and clear blue eyes, and her dazzling-white complexion, with the liness of her form and the perfect grace of her movements, would have made her an object of mark and admiration in whatever circle she might have moved, and were none the less attractive when she was surrounded by the glories of primitive nature.

All three were well dressed, though not with any assumption of style or fashion, and were mounted on fine horses. It was evident that they were merely journeying from one point to another, and not seeking a location, as they had but a

comparatively small amount of baggage, which was strapped upon the back of a led horse.

As they drew up in front of the cabin, they hailed it, after the custom of the country, and the settler came out, together with the greater part of his family, and politely invited them to alight and enter.

"I wish to find the way to Fort Henry," said the gentleman. "Is it far from here?"

"It is a good three miles, and some call it four," replied the settler.

"Can I get a guide here to show me the way? I am willing to pay him for his trouble."

"I reckon you can, sir, and that without pay. We don't charge for small favors in this country. But you had better get down and rest awhile. Your ladies look tired, and you are welcome to the best we have."

As the ladies seemed to be pleased with the proposition, the gentleman assented to it, and the three travelers dismounted and entered the cabin, which they found to be a rough log-building, composed of one large room, which answered the double purpose of a sleeping and cooking room, and a garret, which was also used for a sleeping apartment.

It was a rude and uninviting tenement, but the interior was soon rendered cheerful by the genial hospitality and pleasant smiles of the host and hostess, who gave the strangers a most cordial welcome, and at once made them feel that they were not intruders.

The gentleman introduced himself as Colonel Lee, from North Carolina, and made his entertainers acquainted with his wife and his daughter Annie. He was informed, in turn, that the name of the settler was Wetzel, that he was of German descent, and that he had but lately located in that region. Besides himself and his wife, his family was composed of four sons, fine, healthy, and active boys, all of whom cast upon Annie Lee glances expressive of interest and admiration.

"Is not this a dangerous locality that you have settled in, friend Wetzel?" asked Colonel Lee, while the settler's wife, in defiance of all remonstrances, was proceeding to prepare something for her guests to eat, as she knew well, she said,

that they could have had no dinner, and that they must be hungry.

"Dangerous!" replied Wetzel. "Why do you say so? What danger is to be apprehended here?"

"Danger from the Indians, of course. It seems to me that your settlement is too far from the fort, and that you must always be liable to be attacked by the savages from the other side of the river."

"The red-men are peaceable, sir. I have never been molested by them, and have no fear of them. Why should I be cooped up under the shadow of the fort, where there is no game, and where I could not support my family? Here is good land, to be had for the taking, and I shall do well."

"I hope, most sincerely, that your confidence is not misplaced; but I am afraid that you are too confident. I have heard reports, during my journey from the Carolinas, of scalping-parties that have crossed the border and ravaged the settlements to the north and east of you, and your turn may come next. It is better to be too cautious than too daring in our dealings with the savages."

"It is not likely that they will trouble me. The small scalping-parties that you speak of will not dare to come so near to the fort, and there can be no danger from large bodies of Indians, as the tribes are at peace with us."

"They are never at peace. Their professions and promises of peace are not to be relied on. Suppose they were really at peace now, how long would the peace last? Not longer than until we should become embroiled in war with some other people, and then they would gladly seize the opportunity to murder us and drive us from the land."

"But, there is no fear of a war with any other people. France has given up her claims, and there is no other nation to molest us."

"It is not France that we need to fear now, but England. There is such a dispute with the mother country that it may break out into a war at any moment."

"You astonish me. Can this be possible? We who live in the backwoods so seldom hear any of the news of the day, that we might be bought and sold before we could prevent it. I had heard rumors of some discontent in the eastern provinces;

but supposed that it was a local matter, and of small consequence to the rest of us."

"It is something more serious than mere discontent. We are on the eve of a revolution, and the conflict must soon come, unless England abandons her claim to tax these colonies without their consent and against their will. She will not give it up, and I am ready to believe that the colonies will resist it by force, if they are driven to that extremity."

"This is as new to me as it is interesting, and you must tell me more about it. But your luncheon is ready, sir, and bear-meat is not good, as my wife and I think, unless it is just from the fire. Draw up your stools, my friends, and perhaps your ride and your fast may help you to relish our poor food."

Nothing loth, the three travelers seated themselves at the puncheon table, and did ample justice to Mrs. Wetzel's dinner, which was composed of venison and bear-meat, with corn-bread and sweet milk. Colonel Lee, during the course of the meal, enlightened his host upon the political questions that were then agitating the provinces, including the famous stamp act, the tax upon tea, the closing of Boston harbor, and the growing feeling among the colonists of resistance to these arbitrary and unjust measures. At this information Mr. Wetzel expressed much surprise; but was hopeful that all difficulties might be peaceably adjusted.

"Now, my kind friend," said Colonel Lee, when he had finished his repast, "if you will furnish us with a guide, we will hasten on to the fort, for it is getting late."

"What occasion is there for haste?" asked the settler. "Without wishing to be inquisitive, I would like to inquire why it is that you *must* go to the fort?"

"We are on our way to Fort Pitt, and were induced to turn aside to this settlement, by the rumors that reached us of Indian depredations at the north and east, between this station and Fort Pitt. I hope to be able to learn whether the rumors are true, and to obtain an escort to the end of my journey."

"I can send one of my boys with you; but I have no horse for him to ride, and it is getting late, as you say. The fort is crowded just now, I know, and you might not be able to obtain accommodations. Perhaps it would be better for you to

leave your family here to night, and take Martin with you on one of your horses. My house is a poor one, and I have little to offer the ladies ; but it is likely that they will be even worse supplied at the fort."

After consultation with his wife and daughter, Colonel Lee concluded that it would be the best plan to leave them at Wetzel's until he could make arrangements for their accommodation at the fort, or to enable them to continue their journey if he should succeed in procuring an escort. He set out, therefore, accompanied by Martin, the eldest boy, promising to return at an early hour in the morning.

He did not reach the fort until nearly night, when he found it, as Wetzel had said, crowded with people, a number of emigrants having stopped there for protection, and several families of settlers having taken refuge within the inclosure, on account of Indian depredations in the neighborhood. The fort, which was less than an acre in extent, was so filled with these people, that there was not shelter for more than half of them.

Colonel Lee soon ascertained that the reports which he had heard, of Indian outrages on the Ohio and Monongahela rivers, had not been at all exaggerated, but the greatest alarm and dismay pervaded the inhabitants of that region. The post commandant assured him that it would not be safe for him to continue his journey to Fort Pitt at that time, even if he could obtain an escort ; which would be impossible, as their own post might be attacked at any moment, and all the garrison, as well as the available fighting-men of the neighborhood, would be needed for its defense. He urged upon the colonel to bring his family into the fort without delay, regardless of all inconveniences, and to advise Mr. Wetzel to do the same, as there was then no place of safety outside of its walls.

The traveler was filled with anxiety and alarm by these tidings, and he most heartily wished that he had at once brought his dear ones to the fortification, instead of allowing himself to be governed by the advice of Wetzel, who, as he learned, was regarded as entirely too rash and incautious, although an excellent man in all respects.

It was too late, however, to retrace his steps, and to undo what he had done. He was obliged to remain at the fort,

where he passed a restless night, full of painful anticipations and fearful dreams.

Early in the morning he was astir, with traces of a night of suffering upon his fine countenance. Without waiting for breakfast, pleading his anxiety as an excuse, he hastened from the fort, in company with Martin Wetzel, on his return to the place where he had left all he held dear in the world.

The two friends—for their common fear and anxiety made them such—rode quite rapidly when they first set out; but they slackened their pace, as if by mutual agreement, when they came into the vicinity of Wetzel's clearing. Both were silent, also, neither caring to express to the other the agonizing doubts and fears with which his mind was filled, and which must so soon be solved.

"They are safe, sir! they are safe!" exclaimed Martin Wetzel, as they reached the top of a hill, from which smoke-wreaths could be seen curling up into the air, at the spot where the settler's habitation ought to be.

"Why do you say so?" asked Colonel Lee.

"Don't you see the smoke yonder? That comes from our fire, by which mother is getting breakfast. They are safe, I am sure."

"God grant it! Let us hurry on, my young friend, and we will be there in a few minutes."

A short ride brought them to the spot, and showed them how well founded had been their fears, and how false the hope which they had built upon the smoke.

Those curling smoke-wreaths came, not from a pleasant fire upon the hospitable hearth, but from the charred and blackened remnants which were alone left to tell that a human habitation had stood there.

There was yet a lingering hope. The house might have taken fire by accident, and thus been destroyed, and its inmates might have taken refuge in the woods.

Martin called again and again upon his father and his mother; but there was no answer, and the echoes of the forest mocked his voice, until his father's dog came creeping to his side, whining and moaning most pitifully. Then he knew what had happened; and, dropping from his horse, he sat down among the ruins and burst into tears.

The dog, having succeeded in attracting the attention of the youth, ran to the place where the door of the cabin had been, and commenced to scratch among the burnt wood and ashes, continuing his doleful moaning and whining.

When Martin arose and went to the animal, he discovered that his excitement was caused by a portion of the remains of a human body, which protruded from beneath the blackened timbers. There were no fragments of clothing by which the charred bones could be identified; but Colonel Lee, after a brief inspection of them, decided that they had belonged to a white man. The remains could be no other than those of Mr. Wetzel, the father of the youth who was gazing mournfully upon them, and this fact was confirmed by the interest that was manifested in them by the dog.

Tears were still standing in Martin's eyes; but no more came into them, as he rose and stretched his hand toward the north.

"They have gone that way," he said. "It is there that the red devils live. Shawnee or Mingo—whichever they may be—they shall suffer for this. As long as I can lift a tomahawk or sight a rifle, I will hunt them down, and there shall never be peace between me and them!"

"You speak well, my boy!" exclaimed Colonel Lee, grasping his hand. "You will be a man in a few years, and this will make you one before your time. I wish I could shed tears, as you have done; but that relief is denied to me. I have lost all that was valuable to me in this world, and nothing is left but vengeance. Do you suppose that all were murdered, Martin?"

"I think not, sir. I can see no signs of any more bodies. It is likely that the red-skins have carried off the women—God help them!"

Colonel Lee shuddered, and muttered through his clenched teeth.

"Let us return to the fort," said he, "and try to procure a party to go in pursuit of the savages. As we pass this place, we can bury your father's bones."

"There is nothing more to be done now," said Martin, as he mounted his horse, and the two rode rapidly back to the

Fort.

CHAPTER II.

AN INDIAN HATER.

A few years after the melancholy event related in the last chapter, Colonel Lee again approached the spot on which Wetzel's cabin had stood. It was near the close of the month of September, and in the evening of a most beautiful day.

The blackened ruins of the burned building were still visible, although nearly hidden by weeds and briars. The neglected clearing was covered with bushes and young trees; for no one had attempted to cultivate it since the death of Wetzel and the destruction of his house. The sun was setting behind the belt of forest that stretched far away to the westward, and his last rays cast a mournful glory over the deserted place.

Instead of a few years, it seemed that many must have gone over the head of Colonel Lee since he first visited this spot. His hair was quite gray, and his features bore the impress of age, although he had hardly passed his prime. Instead of the broad-cloth that he had worn when he stopped at Wetzel's cabin, he was clothed in a hunting-shirt and leggings of deerskin, and wore moccasins and a felt hat. This attire, with his weather-beaten face and his long hair, gave him the appearance of a hunter, and he bore the arms of the craft, a rifle, a tomahawk, and a long knife without a sheath.

With a sigh, he dismounted from his horse, which he tied to a young tree, and stood, with folded arms, gazing at the scene of desolation.

As he turned his eyes from the ruins of the cabin, he perceived that he was not alone. On a log, at a short distance from where he was standing, sat a man of strange and wild appearance, who had also been viewing the scene, but whose piercing eyes met Colonel Lee's glance at the moment of his discovery by the other.

The stranger was much younger than Colonel Lee, and was younger, also, than his appearance would have justified an observer in believing him to be. Nearly six feet in height, his

broad shoulders and brawny chest proved him to be a man of great muscular power. His face, which would otherwise have been fine, was deeply marked with the small-pox, and his skin was nearly as dark as an Indian's. His swarthy complexion, combined with his very long, dark hair, his remarkably bright black eyes, and his aboriginal attire, might have easily caused him to be mistaken, at first glance, for an Indian and an enemy, and such Colonel Lee supposed him to be, for he instantly stepped back, and held his rifle in readiness to meet an attack.

He lowered his weapon, however, as soon as he perceived the friendly intentions of the other, who rose from his seat, leaving his own rifle on the ground, and advanced toward the colonel with outstretched hand. As he did so, Colonel Lee observed that two fresh and gory scalps were hanging from his belt.

"You needn't shoot," he said, in a harsh but not unmusical voice. "I may look like an Injun, but I'm white all through. No white man has any call to quarrel with me, and least of all have you; for, unless I am very much mistaken in the man I see before me, we have something in common."

"I must confess that I was inclined to mistake you for an Indian when I first caught sight of you, and I am glad to learn that you are not one of that hated race," replied the colonel, as he gave the stranger his hand. "There is something in your features that seems familiar to me; but I can not remember when or where I have met you."

"Some years ago," rejoined the stranger, passing his hand reflectively over his forehead—"I don't know how many, for I have somehow lost the run of time—there stood a cabin on this spot of ground. It was a humble building; but it was the home of a happy family—father, mother, and four boys—who worked together right willingly, hoping to cut and dig a fortune out of this wilderness.

"On such a day as this has been, there came to the cabin a fine gentleman, with his handsome lady wife, and their lovely daughter, who was as beautiful as a star."

Colonel Lee buried his face in his hands, and groaned as if these words were torture to him.

"They were well received by the poor people who lived in the cabin," continued the stranger, "and the best that it could afford was set before them. When they had finished eating, the

gentleman set out to ride to the fort, taking the eldest son of the family as a guide. You were that gentleman, I believe, and you called yourself Colonel Lee."

"You are right," replied the colonel; "but why do you call up those harrowing remembrances? You are Martin Wetzel, I suppose, who rode back from the fort with me the next morning, and found this place a ruin."

"No, sir; I am not Martin Wetzel."

"Who are you, then? No other person of the family escaped except the mother."

"You have not been in this country lately, sir, or you would have heard of some others. Have you never learned the story of that night?"

"Never. I have been a wanderer. My heart has been broken, and I have tried to forget. Tell it to me, if you can. It will be opening an old wound, that had nearly closed; but I will try to bear it."

"My name is Lewis Wetzel, sir. Martin was the eldest of the brothers, and I was next to him. The attack was made in the early part of the night, while we were sitting around the fire, listening to the conversation of your wife, and admiring the beauty of your daughter. We had no thought that the red-skins were near us, until they fired a volley into the house, and burst in at the door. Father was instantly killed, and I was struck in the breast by a bullet. John was not at the house, having been sent on an errand, and mother escaped in the confusion; but Jacob and I were taken prisoners and carried away."

"My wife! my child!" exclaimed Colonel Lee. "Were they not murdered by the savages?"

"They were carried away with us, after the red-skins had taken father's scalp, and had set fire to the house. During the first day's travel I saw them frequently, and they seemed to be well treated; but, after we camped that night, I did not see them again."

"How did you and your young brother escape?"

"The red-skins thought us so small that it was not worth while to tie us, and we stole away from them at the camp of the second night, while they were asleep. I took a gun from them, and a pair of shoes for each of us, and we followed the trail

back to the river. They chased us; but we hid from them, and made our way to the river, which we crossed on a raft."

"Noble lads! Your father, then, was the only member of your family that was lost."

"Was not that enough? We thought so, for never children loved a father more truly than we loved ours. We swore an oath—here at our ruined home, where our father's bones were buried—that we would never make peace with the red-skins while we could sight a rifle or lift a tomahawk. Whoever may make peace with the bloody murderers, we are not included in the treaty. I have kept my oath, I know. It is not worth while to tell you how many scalps I have taken; but these are the last."

Lewis Wetzel touched the gory scalplocks that dangled from his belt, and his glance was so wild and vindictive, that his companion shuddered and turned pale.

"If you," said the colonel, "who have lost only one near relative, can hold such enmity toward that hated race, what ought to be my feelings, who have lost my wife and child, all that was dear to me in the world?"

"I told you, sir, that I thought we had something in common."

"I wish I had seen you after you escaped from the Indians. I could not get a party from the fort to follow the band that attacked your house, and I believed, and I was confirmed in that belief by all with whom I spoke upon the subject, that my loved ones had undoubtedly been murdered that night. I was immediately called away by duties of the most imperative nature, and, from that time until now, I have not been within a hundred miles of this spot. If I could have supposed that my wife and child had been carried away as captives, I would have abandoned everything, and would have spared no exertion to recover them. But regrets are useless. Do you think it possible, my friend, that they were spared by the savages—that they may be yet living?"

"I would not wish to encourage any false hopes; but it is possible."

"If they are living, what must be their condition?"

Wetzel shook his head doubtfully.

"Whatever may have happened," he said, "you have one hope and one duty left—vengeance."

"Yes, yes; I must have vengeance. The feeling is stronger in me now than it ever was. I will follow your trade, my friend. I will join you, if you will admit me as a partner in your vengeful business. I will hunt those savages everywhere, and perhaps—perhaps—the fate of my loved ones may not have been as bad as I have feared."

"You could hardly do the work that I have to do, sir, or endure what I have to go through with. You are much older than I am, and you have not been bred to a forest life and to savage ways, as I have been."

"But a strong will and a determined spirit can do much. You must have met your enemies lately, judging from those bloody tokens which you carry."

"It is hardly more than two hours, sir, since the red-skins who wore these scalp-locks were living."

"Indeed! There are Indians, then, in the neighborhood."

"Plenty of them. I have followed the trail, and hung on the flanks of the band, for near a hundred miles."

"For what purpose are they here?"

"They want to take Fort Henry."

"The people at the fort ought to be informed of this."

"They have been. Hark! I hear the red scoundrels now. They are moving again."

"Your ears are sharper than mine. I hear nothing."

"You have not been trained to this business as I have been. Would you not like to take a look at them?"

"Had we not better go to the fort?"

"You may go, sir, if you are afraid of them. For my part, I have some more business with the red villains."

"I am not afraid; but I thought that we might be exposing our lives uselessly. What shall I do with my horse?"

"I will hide him for you. You will not be going into danger if you follow me."

Wetzel tied the colonel's horse in a thicket near at hand, and quietly led the way down a ravine that reached toward the river, until he came to an enormous oak tree, near a bridle-path through the forest. An opening in the trunk, on the side that was turned from the trail, showed that it was hollow, and

Wetzel entered it, motioning to his companion to do the same.

Hardly were they safe within the tree, when Colonel Lee heard a humming noise coming up the trail, which he knew was caused by the tramp of men and the buzzing sound of voices. It was the same noise that had attracted the attention of Wetzel at a much greater distance, when he said that the Indians were moving.

Wetzel, with his tomahawk and knife, enlarged a small hole on the side of the trunk next to the trail, so that he and his companion could have a view of the advancing body of men, without being themselves discovered. It was now nightfall, but there was sufficient light to enable them to distinguish near objects quite plainly.

In a few moments the head of the column could be seen, and a large number of Indians came into the ravine, and crossed it, going in the direction of the fort. As they marched mostly in single file, the white men were able to count them, and, when the entire body had passed, the enumeration had swelled to near four hundred. Wetzel pointed out to his companion a white man, mounted on a horse, who appeared to be the leader of the band.

"That is Simon Girty," said he. "The infernal scoundrel! He is ten times meaner than any red-skin in the lot."

"What shall we do now?" asked Colonel Lee, when all appeared to have passed.

"Wait a moment, and I will tell you."

Hardly had Wetzel spoken, when a straggling Indian made his appearance, walking rapidly, to catch up with the main body. As he came near the tree, he struck his tomahawk, in a spirit of bravado, against the giant trunk. It was the last blow that his arm ever struck; for Lewis Wetzel had slipped out behind the tree, and his own tomahawk was buried in the brain of the savage, before the latter had loosened his own weapon from the oak.

In a moment the Indian Sayer had secured the scalp of his enemy, and then beckoned to his companion to follow him.

"Where now?" asked the colonel, as young Wetzel led the way up the ravine.

"To the fort. We must get there before the red-skins reach it, and I think we can easily do so, as they will hardly try to attack at this hour."

When they reached the site of the burned cabin, Wetzel brought his friend's horse from the thicket in which he had left it, and directed him to mount and follow his lead. Striking into the interior, through the forest, and traveling very rapidly, he made a circuit around the fort, reaching the gate, which was on the east side of the inclosure, without molestation. After some delay, they were admitted within the fort, where they were warmly welcomed, and where their news caused great excitement.

CHAPTER III.

AN EVENTFUL SIEGE.

THE tidings that were brought to the fort by Wetzel and his companion were not unexpected; for the settlers in the neighborhood had become alarmed during the day, and had brought in their families for safety. Lewis Wetzel, also, had sent intelligence to the commandant, to the effect that a strong body of Indians were on their way to attack the position. The garrison had not supposed, however, that such numbers would be brought against them, and they were poorly prepared for the emergency, as there were only forty-two fighting-men in the fort, and their ammunition was fearfully insufficient.

Old men and boys were numbered among the forty-two; but the majority of them were trained Indian-fighters, border sharpshooters, who feared no odds while their ammunition held out. All were prepared to fight to the last, in defense of their lives and their families.

Early in the morning the battle commenced, and nearly half of this little garrison were soon put *hors du combat* by two sallies that were made in small parties, which were overwhelmed by the entire force of the savages. Then the attack

commenced, the Indians advancing bravely to the attack, and the garrison firing slowly and with great effect, from the block-houses at the corners of the inclosure.

The attack and defense of Fort Henry, although comparatively a small affair, was very exciting while it lasted, and must be remembered by all readers of the history of our border warfare. The noble intrepidity of Miss Elizabeth Zane, who volunteered to procure a keg of powder from an adjoining house, and who performed her mission under the fire of the Indians, escaping unhurt amid a volley from their guns, is one of the most interesting episodes from history. So, also, is the daring exploit of Major McCulloch, who, the last of a relief-party that he had brought to the succor of the garrison, was cut off by the savages, and hemmed in on all sides but one. On that side was a precipice, reaching almost perpendicularly, near two hundred feet, down to the bed of Short creek. With a defiant glance at his foes, the gallant McCulloch rushed his horse at the precipice, and boldly made the leap, for life or death. In a few moments the astounded savages beheld him riding across the valley, uninjured and triumphant.

But our story has nothing to do with the conduct of the brief siege, on the part of the assailants or the garrison, except so far as it concerns the persons in whom we are chiefly interested.

Colonel Lee was placed by the commandant in charge of one of the block-houses, and he conducted its defense in a style which showed that he was not new to the trade of war. His commanding manner and his skillful arrangements inspired his followers with courage and confidence, and no portion of the little fort was better defended than the corner which was under his control.

Lewis Wetzel seemed to be everywhere, and to be animated only by a desire to find the thickest of the fight. In the block-houses, behind the pickets, wherever the assault was most furious, his athletic form was to be seen, and his wild shouts drowned the fierce yells of the savages. His eyes fairly blazed with excitement, and the crack of his unerring rifle was always the crack of doom to one of the foremost
foes

When the Indians temporarily abandoned the attack, at about one o'clock in the afternoon, the intermission was a great relief to the little garrison, who were nearly exhausted by their labors, and whose supply of powder was entirely expended. As there was powder in a house about sixty rods from the fort, it was determined to send for a keg, and a volunteer was called for, to undertake the dangerous errand.

Colonel Lee, with several men from his block-house, was on the spot when the call was made, and he noticed, among the young men who eagerly stepped forward to volunteer for the service, one whose coolness and courage had frequently attracted his attention during the fight, and whom he had good reason to remember.

This was a fine-looking young man, of very gentlemanly appearance, with light hair, blue eyes, and a fresh and ruddy complexion, who was dressed in the buckskin leggings, green hunting-shirt, and fox-skin cap, which was the uniform of more than one body of continental troops.

When Colonel Shepherd, the commandant, called for a volunteer to go after the powder, this young man was one of the first to step forward and offer his services. All the volunteers, however, were so eager to undertake the dangerous task, that they were told to decide among themselves who should go on the errand.

It was while they were contending for the honor of the adventure, that Elizabeth Zane made her appearance, and preferred her claims to the privilege of being permitted to go. After denial and much persuasion, which she met with most heroic arguments, her request was finally granted, and she went out at the gate and walked boldly toward the house in which she was to find the powder.

When she had gone, Colonel Lee turned to the young man in the green hunting-shirt, and there was an expression of deep emotion on his face as he held out his hand.

"George Wetherell," said he, "you are a brave man. I honor you for what you have done to-day."

"I have done nothing more than my duty," replied the young man. "I thought you had forgotten me, Colonel Lee. In truth, I must say that I hoped you had, as you were once

so anxious to exclude me from the remembrance of yourself and your family."

"I have much cause for regret as well as for sorrow. But how is it that I find you here? I had supposed that you were a Tory, and that you would be found on the other side in this war."

"That is one point, at least, in which you were mistaken," said Wetherell, with some bitterness in his tone. "You must have believed very badly of me, indeed, if you could suppose that I would be found fighting with bloodthirsty savages against my own race, especially against these women and children. My father was a Tory, it is true; but, although I believe that he was honest in his principles, it does not follow that I was obliged to embrace them."

"Your father was very bitter and violent toward those who differed with him. He did me a great wrong."

"My father is dead, Colonel Lee, and he is not the only one who has been taken from this world since I last saw you. Near this very spot, not many years ago—I hope I may now say it freely—was lost the only one who made existence dear to me. Since that time, I have always been ready to risk my life upon any venture by which I might possibly serve my country, and you may judge, by these garments, how and where I have served."

"I must speak with you again, my young friend, if I may call you so at last. See! that brave girl has reached the house, while the Indians have been looking at her in wonder. Why is it that they have not attempted to harm her? They might have shot her down a dozen times; but they have not fired a gun."

Colonel Lee and young Wetherell walked close to the palisades, where a number of others were standing, eagerly watching for the reappearance of Elizabeth Zane. The Indians, in the meantime, had drawn nearer to the building which she had entered, having probably gained some inkling of what was meant by this strange movement.

In a few minutes she emerged from the house, bearing the keg of powder in her arms. There was an evident desire, on the part of her friends who were watching her from the fort, to give her a cheer, in token of her success thus far, and to

encourage her on her return ; but it was suppressed by the fear that such a demonstration might cause the Indians to suspect her purpose and endeavor to defeat it. A subdued murmur ran along the palisades, and every rifle was leveled in the direction of the outlying Indians, to protect the fair messenger, or to avenge her fall.

When she reappeared, the savages were not slow to notice the keg of powder that she carried in her arms, and yells of rage announced their discovery.

Guns were pointed from the foot of the hill, and from every place of concealment of the savages, and it seemed that her doom would certainly be sealed before she could reach the fort.

At this moment an Indian girl ran out from one of the log-huts in the vicinity, and appeared to be remonstrating with the savages ; for, wherever she went, the threatening guns were lowered, and no further demonstrations were made toward Elizabeth Zane. The Indian girl, or woman—for it was impossible, at that distance, for those in the fort to decide what she was—was richly attired in the Delaware style, and was crowned with a head-dress of colored feathers.

George Wetherell, who had been earnestly gazing at the scene, grasped the arm of Colonel Lee, and clutched it convulsively.

"Do you see her?" he exclaimed. "Do you see that girl yonder?"

"Which one? Our fair friend who is bringing the powder?"

"No. She who is among the Indians, preventing them from firing on our messenger."

"I see an Indian girl, who really does seem, now that you have called my attention to her, to be engaged in that work of mercy. May God bless her for her good efforts!"

"An Indian girl! Is your sight so poor? She is as white as you are. Your love was not such as mine was, or you would see better. If my senses have not left me, I know that girl, and I must go to her."

"Are you mad?" exclaimed the colonel, as he endeavored to detain the young man.

"Mad or sane, I must have a nearer view of that face."

replied Wetherell, as he tore himself loose from the colonel's grasp, and sprung over the palisades at a bound.

This rash and daring action, inexplicable as it was, caused a new sensation among the assailants and the defenders of the fort. The former again raised their guns, and the latter loudly called upon the young man to come back; but he heeded neither the threatening demonstrations of the one side, nor the entreaties of the other, as he ran toward the spot where the Indian girl was still engaged in remonstrating with the warriors.

"Go back to the fort," said Elizabeth Zine, who had nearly reached the gate, and who supposed that Wetherell had come to assist her. "I need no help, and you will only draw the fire of the Indians."

But the young man passed on without noticing her, and continued the course he had taken.

Such a proceeding could not fail to attract the serious attention of the savages, who soon recovered from their astonishment, and fired a volley at Wetherell as he approached them. Fortunately he stumbled and fell, and the balls passed over him.

"The man is crazy," said Lewis Wetzel, who was standing in the fort, with one hand on the palisades. "Can any one tell me what this means? He is hit! Stand back, all of you, and I will bring him in."

The Indian Slayer leaped over the pickets, and bounded toward the fallen man, just as Wetherell raised himself and again pressed forward. Another volley laid him on the ground, with a bullet in his breast, and the next moment Wetzel was at his side.

The brawny borderer lifted the young man in his arms, and hastened back to the fort with his burden, unmindful of the shots and yells of the savages behind him. The gate was opened to receive him, as it had just opened to receive Miss Zine and the powder, and was closed again as he laid the wounded man on the ground.

Wetherell was immediately surrounded by curious inquirers; but Colonel Lee was the first to kneel down and speak to him.

"Have you gone mad, George Wetherell?" he asked, "or

have you really seen a vision? Please to tell me what it means."

"You may call it a vision, or what you please," faintly replied the young man; "but I have seen her. It was really she."

"It was who? Of whom are you speaking?"

"Of your daughter—of Annie Lee!"

There was a triumphant smile on the young man's face as he uttered these words; but, the next moment, blood gushed from his mouth, and he fainted. Colonel Lee had only time to place him in charge of the women in the fort, when he was called away by the intelligence that the Indians were about to make another assault.

During the remainder of the day, the fighting continued, with no loss on the part of the garrison, while many of the besiegers fell under the fire of the unerring rifles in the block-houses. After dark, the assailants brought up a hollow log, of which they had endeavored to make a field piece, by binding it with chains. This they loaded with powder and slugs, and applied a match to it. It did the gate no harm, as it burst, and scattered destruction among those who had invented and charged it. No further attempt at an attack was made that night.

Early the next morning the garrison were reinforced by parties under Colonel Swearingen and McCulloch, and considered themselves safe. After the remarkable escape of McCulloch, the Indians raised the siege and departed, setting fire to the log-houses and fences outside of the fort. They were not molested on their retreat, as the white men were glad to get rid of them on any terms, and did not feel strong enough to pursue.

Colonel Lee had not neglected George Wetherell, and had been gratified to learn that the young man was not dangerously injured. After the departure of the Indians, Wetherell was so much improved, that he was able to sit up and talk when the colonel came in to see him.

"Are you sure that you are in your right mind this morning?" asked the old gentleman. "I was afraid, yesterday, that you had gone crazy, and what you said to me did not have the effect that it would otherwise have had. If you are

sure that you retain your right senses this morning, I wish you would tell me what you saw, after you leaped over the palisades and left me."

"I," replied Wetherell, "was never more sane in my life. I know that I was rash and foolhardy; but I do not regret it; I would have gone through far greater dangers to learn what I now am certain of."

"What did you learn? What is it that you are certain of?"

"I learned that your daughter is still living. I am certain that I saw Annie Lee yesterday."

"Can there be no doubt of this? I asked Lewis Wetzel, the man who brought you in, and he said that he did not recognize her. He saw her, the day she was lost, and he thinks he would be likely to remember her."

"Ah, Colonel Lee, neither he nor you could see with my eyes. Your love is not such as mine: for I could recognize the least glance of her eye, the least motion of her head, the least gesture of her hand. When you saw only an Indian girl, from behind the pickets, I saw Annie Lee, and I went out to make sure it was not a vision. It was not a vision, but a blessed reality, and I know that she is living. She has not changed, except that she has grown older, and her complexion is browner than it used to be. A new hope has sprung up in my heart, that I may find her and recover her, though I am afraid the recovery will only be a new torture to me, as I presume that your opposition to me has not changed."

"I will oppose you in nothing, my boy, if I may call you so," earnestly replied the colonel. "You have given me such a great relief, and such a blessed hope, that you are very near to my heart. I once opposed the son, because of the father, and that opposition lost to me my wife and my darling child. I left the Carolinas because I wished to place Annie out of sight and hearing of you. On my journey, all that was dear to me in life was taken from me. I can never forgive myself; but I hope that you, who have brought me such glad tidings, may find it in your heart to forgive me."

"I have no words of blame for you, Colonel Lee. Did Wetzel tell you what Indians they were who made the attack upon his father's house?"

"They were Shawnees and Delawares."

"Annie is among the Delawares, then. Her gown was ornamented in the Delaware style, and a Delaware blanket was thrown over her shoulder."

"How must we seek for her? What shall we do first?"

"I would like to see Lewis Wetzel. I have heard much of him, and I am sure that no better man could be found to assist in the search, if he should be willing to undertake it."

"I will bring him to you, if you are strong enough to speak with him."

"I am weak, but there is nothing dangerous about this wound, and it must soon heal."

CHAPTER IV.

[FIRE AND WATER.

TIME passes; and we must skip over a space of more than two years, during which our young republic was engaged in her struggle with the mother country, and the border territories were continually assailed by savage enemies, instigated by British emissaries and British gold, as well as by a desire to repossess themselves of the hunting-grounds from which they had been driven.

We are thus brought into the early summer of 1780.

On the north side of the Ohio—a region which was then occupied by tribes of Indians, and where the white men seldom dared to set their feet, unless they went in large and well-armed bodies to attack the Indian towns—at a considerable distance from the river, a solitary hunter was winding his way up a steep and wooded ascent. It was yet early in the morning, and his moccasined feet brushed the dew from the grass and leaves, making a trail that might easily be followed by practiced eyes.

The hunter was a young and fine-looking man; like, but athletic; vigorous, though handsome. The rays of the morning sun caused his light and curling hair to glitter like gold,

and showed that his complexion was clear and fair, though somewhat browned by exposure to the elements. The Saxon hair and features, as well as the green hunting-shirt and fox-skin cap that he wore, were those of George Wetherell, who had come alone into that dangerous wilderness, to find a person whom he had agreed to meet there.

Dangerous as the region was, the look and bearing of the young man showed that he feared no enemy he might meet, and his rifle, his well-filled ammunition-pouch, his tomahawk and hunting-knife, proved that he was prepared to encounter any adversary, whether man or beast.

When he reached the top of the ascent, he stopped to take breath, and looked around at the route by which he had come, and at the steep declivity which lay before him.

"It is certain that there is no trail here," he said, "except that which I have made this morning, and that is plain enough for a drunken Indian to follow. But another night's dew will rub it out, and it would be of no consequence if it should remain, as it is hardly probable that I am on the right track.

"And yet I think I can't be far from it. I found the blazed tree that he spoke of, and a man might as well have looked for a needle in a haystack as for that. Then I took the course he gave me, and I am sure I have followed it nearly as well as if I had been laying off the land with compass and chain. It is not to be supposed that Martin Wetzel would have left any trail, especially as he makes a sort of a home of that hut of his in the woods. This is such a hill as that he told me I must climb, and it is cut off by just such a descent as he spoke of. There are many such in the country, to be sure; but I am inclined to think that his hut must be right under the cliff here. I see no sign of a creek; but that may be in the ravine below me. All I have to do is to follow the course, and take care of my neck."

So saying, the young man again walked forward, and soon commenced the descent. He found it so rough and difficult, that it took him some time to accomplish the task, and he was obliged to be very cautious, in order to keep the promise that he made to himself concerning the care of his neck.

When he reached the foot of the cliff—if we may so call

the wooded mass of rock and earth that he had descended—he was not long in espying a small cabin, rudely built of unhewn logs, and placed in a sort of recess, under an overhanging rock.

“This is the place, and there is the domicile,” said he. “I ought, indeed, to be very thankful for the good-fortune that has enabled me to find such a speck of a building in the midst of the wilderness. It remains to be seen whether the lord of the mansion is at home. If he is not, I suppose I can keep house for him until he returns.”

As the door was closed, Wetherell went to it, and knocked upon it loudly with the haft of his knife. After a few moments he was answered by a harsh and querulous voice, in a half angry and half careless tone:

“C-c-come in, c-c-cuss you, whatever you are, or st-st-stay out if you like.”

“That don’t sound like Wetzel’s voice,” said Wetherell. “If it is he, something must have happened to him.”

Nevertheless, after loosening his tomahawk in his belt, he opened the door, and entered the single room that the cabin contained. There he saw, seated on a puncheon stool, before the remnant of a fire, a man whose pinched and blue features, drawn-up limbs, shaking form and chattering teeth, showed that he was laboring under a severe attack of fever and ague. A blanket was thrown over his shoulders; his ammunition, rifle, and other weapons were scattered about the floor; and he appeared to have lost all interest in the concerns of this world.

“What is the matter with you, Martin Wetzel?” asked Wetherell. “I would hardly have known you. You look as if you had been struck by lightning.”

“D-d-did you never have the chills?—b-b-by thunder!” replied the other.

“No; and I hope that I may never have them, if they use a man up so badly. How long do they last?”

“As long as they b-b-blasted please. L-l-leave me alone, and let me sh-sh-shake.”

Hoping to do something that might help his friend, the young hunter went out with his tomahawk, and brought in some logs, with which he renewed the fire in front of the sick

man. As he felt hungry then, and as there was the undressed carcass of a deer on the floor, which had probably been brought in just before Wetzel had been taken with his paroxysm, he partly flayed it, and cut some slices from one of the hams, which he laid on the coals to broil.

When they were done, he tried to prevail upon his companion to eat, but the rich flavor of the cooked meat only excited Wetzel's disgust, and Wetherell, with a true hunter's appetite, soon disposed of all the slices himself.

Hardly had he finished his repast, when his attention was attracted to a noise outside the cabin.

"What's that?" he asked, as he suddenly started up and listened.

"Injans," calmly replied Wetzel. "They have followed your trail."

"The smoke has brought them here, more likely. If ever two white men were in a fix, we are in one now."

While he was speaking, the young man had fastened the door with a stout bar of oak. He was none too soon; for there was a rush against it the next moment, followed by a yell from the disappointed savages without. Wetzel, who had ceased his chattering, and who had rolled over on the floor in a burning fever, paid no more attention to these demonstrations than if they had been occurring at the north pole.

"What shall we do now?" asked Wetherell, as several bullets rattled against the door. "The Indians will soon have our scalps, unless we can think of some way to save them."

"What of it?" groaned Wetzel. "Let 'em come. My head is on fire now, and it can't be worse."

This response was not at all encouraging to Wetherell, and his uneasiness was increased by the triumphant shouts of the savages, who were delighted by the discovery that they had caught in a trap two white men, one of whom they had good reason to hate and fear, as a mortal enemy of their race. They again attacked the door, first with their hatchets, and then with a log; but the stout punchcons and the tough cross-bar resisted their efforts. Wetherell began to think that there was yet some chance of safety, unless the Indians should find

some chinks in the logs to fire through, or should burn down the little cabin.

The latter contingency appeared to him, on reflection, to be the most probable. Indeed, it was soon reduced to a certainty; for the savages ceased their whoops and yells, and became busily engaged at one corner of the building, where they were evidently making a pile of brush against the logs.

Wetherell spoke to his companion, and endeavored to rouse him to a sense of the danger that threatened them; but he received nothing in reply, except groans and incoherent exclamations, the purport of which was that the sufferer did not care what might become of him.

Soon a yell of vengeance and triumph announced that the Indians had lighted their pile, and were dancing around the bonfire. The flames began to glow through the chinks in the logs, and smoke poured in volumes into the little room.

Again the young hunter spoke to Wetzel, who had not been disturbed by the crackling brush, the yells of the savages, or the smothering clouds of smoke, and exhorted him to rise and do something for their common safety; but Wetzel, crazed by fever, was deaf to all appeals.

"I can't stand this any longer," despairingly exclaimed Wetherell. "I will not stay in here and be roasted to death. Martin, I must make a rush for life, though there is hardly the ghost of a chance. If I must die, I will send at least one red-skin before me. Get up, and let us meet it like men."

There was no answer from the man on the floor.

Wetherell grasped his rifle by the barrel, slipped the cross-bar out of its fastenings, threw open the door, and sprang out into the midst of his foes.

The Indians had been expecting such a movement, and were gathered near the door; but they were hardly prepared for the vigor with which Wetherell charged upon them, whirling his clubbed rifle about his head, and clearing a bloody path for his escape. They closed in upon him in a moment, however, and one seized his gun, while another grasped his arm, and a third raised a tomahawk above his head.

The fate of the young hunter would then have been sealed

if he and his foes had not been at that instant astonished by the sudden appearance of Martin Wetzel, who rushed out of the cabin, with his rifle in one hand and his tomahawk in the other, his face streaming with perspiration, and his eyes blazing with a wild and unnatural fire.

With one sweep of his rifle he struck down two of Wetherell's captors, and with his tomahawk scattered the brains of his would-be executioner.

"Follow me," he whispered to his friend, and then, with a fierce yell, and a whirl of his clubbed rifle, he sprung through the encircling savages, and dashed off down the ravine.

Wetherell, freed from his assailants, found it easy to rush through the path which his friend had cleared for him, and bounded after him down the declivity.

Wetzel seemed to fly, rather than to run, down the steep and rough descent. Neither heights nor depths were any obstacles to him, and he passed over rocks and through gullies with equal ease. As for Wetherell, he did not know how he got down, whether he kept his feet, or whether he rolled and tumbled to the foot of the hill. He only knew that the Indians were behind him, and that he must run for life.

When he reached the bottom of the ravine, he was pleased to perceive that he was only a short distance in the rear of his friend, who at once plunged down into the creek, which, although somewhat swollen, had not half filled its high banks.

The young hunter unhesitatingly followed Wetzel's example, and found himself swimming rapidly down the turbid stream, close to the bank. Their pursuers contented themselves with running along the bank above, waiting to get a shot at the white men, or to seize them when they should emerge from the water.

They had been in the water but a few moments, when Wetzel suddenly turned, under the shade of an overhanging rock, and disappeared from view. Wetherell turned at the same place; but he would have utterly failed to find his friend if he had not been seized by a hand that was stretched out to him, and drawn into a hole in the bank, which had escaped his observation, as it was partly under the stream, and was concealed by overhanging vines and bushes. The hole

was about knee-deep in water at the entrance; but it rose to a dry shelf, on which Wetherell took refuge, while his companion arranged the bushes which covered the entrance.

"They can't find us here," said Wetzel, as he seated himself by the side of his friend. "It was a close shave, but we are safe now."

"You seem to have got well right quickly," replied Wetherell.

"I never had such a chill in my life. The world might have been burning, and it wouldn't have bothered me. The fever was on me when you opened the door, and I was just in the right fix for a dash at the red-skins; but I didn't rightly know what was going on. I seemed to wake up all of a sudden, and I reckon I settled one or two of them. The excitement helped me, and the jump into the water brought me back to life. Hear the red scoundrels yell. They have missed us, and they will never find our trail."

The two white men sat in silence for a little while, and listened to the shouts and exclamations of the savages, as they sought, in the water and out of it, for some trace of the victims who had so strangely escaped from them. Gradually the noise decreased, as they pursued the search further down the stream, and Wetherell called the attention of his companion to a new phase of the adventure.

"The water is rising in this hole," said he. "What does it mean?"

"It means trouble. It has been raining lately, higher up the creek, and the flood is just coming down here. We must get out of this place, George, or we will be drowned like rats within half an hour."

"But where shall we go to? The Indians are everywhere."

"Everywhere except at the place we last left. The safest thing we can do, I reckon, will be to go back to my crib. The red-skins will hardly be likely to look for us there."

"A very good idea, if the hut is standing. Don't you suppose that it has been burned down?"

"Those logs don't burn so easy. I took half a look at them during the scrimmage, and saw that the fire had hardly touched them. Where is your gun?"

"I dropped it when I jumped into the water."

"Mine is in the creek, too. We will look for them, if we live, when we get time. Follow me, George, for the water is rising fast in this hole."

Wetzel dived out of the cave, and was followed by his companion. On coming to the surface, they swam downstream a short distance, and then climbed up the bank, where they wrung the water from their heavy garments. Noticing no signs of Indians in the neighborhood, they silently and sedulously crept back to the cabin, where smoke was still rising from the smoldering logs and the remnant of the brush fire, and where those dead savages were lying on the ground, but no living enemies were to be seen.

"I would like to gather in those scalps," said Wetzel; "but I don't dare to do it now. We must hide ourselves, George; for it is likely that the red-skins will be here again."

There was a small loft in the cabin, formed of poles, on which Wetzel had laid the skins he had collected in many hunts. Into this the two white men mounted, laid themselves down on the skins, and remained quiet, glad to rest from their fatigue.

CHAPTER V.

TRAPPING AND BEING TRAPPED.

THE night before the attack on Martin Wetzel's hut, two white men were seated on a rock, near the same stream in which Wetzel and Wellerich had found a refuge from their savage pursuers. Although they were near the same stream, they were several miles above the solitary cabin, and in a yet wilder and more broken country. The night was quite dark; but it was not far from dawn, though no signs of approaching day could be discovered in the eastern horizon.

One of the two was a man advanced in years, who, by his gray hair, his fine features, and his commanding air, might be recognized as Colonel Lee; while the long locks, swarthy complexion, and brilliant black eyes of the other, no less

surely denoted Lewis Wetzel, the inveterate Indian Slayer and foe of the red race.

"We may as well be moving, colonel, if you wish to see my trap," said Wetzel. "The red-skins must be on their way by this time, and they will soon reach the creek."

"I shall be curious to see it, if any thing can be seen in this darkness."

"It will be light enough, by the time I spring the trap."

"As it is possible that it may not spring exactly to suit you, we had better look to our weapons."

"We shall be likely to need them, in any event; but mine are always in order. Come, colonel, if you are ready."

Half an hour's walking brought them to a place where the creek had forced its way through a rocky hill, leaving a deep and narrow chasm, in which the torrent roared and foamed as it fought its way to the distant ocean.

"No farther in this direction, colonel," said Lewis Wetzel, as he laid his hand upon the old gentleman's arm. "It would never do to cross the trail, as the red-skins might be sharp enough to discover our tracks, and suspect that something was wrong. You don't see the trail in the darkness, I suppose; but I can see it plainly enough—perhaps because I know it so well. It comes right over the brow of the hill, and strikes the creek at the partly-fallen tree you see yonder, bending over to the other side. It is on that tree that the red-skins cross, and they have used it as a bridge for many years, I suppose. It was not very long ago that I found it out, and I determined that I would make a trap for them when I could see a good opportunity to work it. The news we learned at the Delaware village has given me a good chance, though not as good as I wanted. Come down with me, and be careful how you step, and I will show you how I catch my birds."

Colonel Lee followed his companion to the edge of the chasm, along which they proceeded cautiously until they reached the tree that Wetzel had spoken of. It was a large and gnarled post-oak, which had been partly blown down, and the top had settled on one side, while the roots remained imbedded in the earth and wrapped around the rocks on the other.

"I do not yet understand your trap," said Colonel Lee.

"About six feet from this side, I have cut that tree nearly in two," said Wetzel.

"It must have been a hard task."

"It was; but it was not as difficult as filling the notch, and covering the cut with bark, which I fastened with gum, so that a person would not be likely to notice in the daytime that it had been interfered with, unless he should examine the trunk closely. That trap cost me a great deal of labor; but I hope to be well paid for it this morning."

"Are you sure that it will break as you wish it to? Do you know what weight it will bear?"

"One man's weight would break it, I think, if it were not for the prop. Do you see that large branch, which reaches out against the rocks on this side? I have cut that branch; but it still acts as a prop, though I can pull it out whenever I wish to. I have tied a grape-vine to it, which leads up here to a hiding-place, from which I will work the trap. We had better get into cover, colonel, as it is growing lighter, and the red rascals may come at any moment."

Wetzel led the old gentleman behind a rock, where they were completely concealed from view, and told him that he had nothing to do but to keep quiet and wait.

"Don't touch the grape-vine," said he. "I know how to manage it, and will pull it when the time comes. I have spent a great deal of time and trouble over this affair, and it would be a bad blow to me if it should go wrong."

They had waited but a few moments, when Colonel Lee, who was watching through a crevice in the rock, reported that the Indians were coming over the hill. On they came, some forty or fifty of them, in single file as usual, naked to the breech-strap, painted and armed for war. They marched in silence, scarcely a word being spoken, and soon reached the tree, and commenced to cross.

"Let me know when a good load gets on," said Wetzel, as he nervously gripped the grape-vine.

One by one the Indians fled onto the tree and crossed over, until nearly half were on the other side, and the rest still crowded the trunk.

"Now is the time," said the colonel, touching the arm of his companion.

"May the d—l catch them!" exclaimed Wetzel, tugging at the grape-vine with all his strength.

It moved—the prop flew out from under the tree, twitching the grape-vine out of Wetzel's hands—the trunk cracked, broke, swayed, and fell downward into the abyss with a tremendous crash, amid the yells of the Indians on the other shore and of those who were carried down by the mass.

The trap had succeeded, but not as well as its projector had hoped it would. A number of the Indians had been dashed down into the chasm by the shock of the fall; but the tree, instead of dropping bodily into the torrent, had slid from the further side, and its butt had settled against the rocks, where it was caught and firmly held.

"If you have good lungs, colonel, now is the time to prove 'em!" exclaimed Wetzel. "Yell like a dozen painters, if you can, and shoot down those sneaking varmints that are climbing up the tree."

Suiting the action to the word, the Indian Slayer uttered a wild and furious yell, leveled his rifle, and shot from the tree one of the Indians who were climbing up the trunk. Colonel Lee followed his example, and then both loaded and fired as fast as they could, yelling like demons all the while.

The Indians who had already crossed, astonished by the breaking of the tree, and perceiving that a trap had been laid for them, were again surprised by the shouting and firing in their rear. Doubtless supposing that they were attacked by a strong force of white men or hostile Indians, they turned and fled from their unseen antagonists, leaving their friends on the tree to scramble out of danger as well as they could. A few of these escaped, and the remainder were shot down by the remorseless rifles of Wetzel and Colonel Lee.

When the Indian Slayer saw that his foes had fled, and that his work of death was finished, he laid his rifle on the rocks, and scrambled down into the chasm, for the purpose of securing the scalps of those who had been killed by the fall.

This undertaking was a difficult and perilous one, and it was not until the lapse of more than half an hour that he returned to his companion, with four dripping scalps hanging from his belt.

"These are all I could get," he said, with a vindictive glance at his trophies. "The rest of the red rascals were washed down the creek. The trap didn't do all that I expected it to do; but I ought not to grumble, as it worked, I reckon, as well as it could have been made to work. Anyhow, the heads that wore these scalps will never plot the murder of any more white men. The next thing to do, colonel, is to follow up the trail of the villains, and pick off some more of them."

"You seem to think of nothing but killing Indians."

"It is the business of my life, and it will not be finished until I die."

"But this war-party is going across the river. Do you expect to follow them so far?"

"They won't go across the Ohio, colonel. They have been surprised, and have lost so many, that they will soon go back to their village, where they will have a grand medicine pow-wow over the affair."

"This is bloody work, Wetzel. We have been successful in killing a number of our enemies this season; but I can not see how it advances me in my search for my wife and child."

"If we knew where they were, sir, we would go right there; but we have no trace of them, and we can only beat about and reconnoiter the Delaware villages. We have done so, as far as we have gone, and we will continue to do so, if you wish; but we must take what comes in our way."

"Very well. Lead on, and I will follow you."

Down the steep side of the cliff clambered the Indian Slayer, followed with difficulty by his older companion, until they reached the trunk of the fallen tree, on which they worked their way to the other side of the chasm.

It was now broad daylight, and the trail which the Indians had left in their rapid flight was so plain that the white men could easily follow it. They were in no haste to pursue, however, as their enemies had more than an hour's start of them, and they could not hope to effect any thing before night, when they might steal upon the encampment of the red-men, and "pick off a few," as Wetzel had said.

They followed the trail at their leisure, over hills and through valleys, mainly keeping the course of the creek. It

was near noon when, after going through the forest, to cross a bend of the stream, they found themselves in a ravine, through the bottom of which the creek flowed.

"Some white man has been here before us," said Colonel Lee, as he glanced up the side of the ravine. "There is something yonder that looks very like a log-cabin."

"You are right," replied Wetzel. "That must be my brother Martin's hut. I have heard him speak of it; but I never had the luck to come across it before. He is a queer fellow, and he always wanted something that he could call a home, he said, where he could rest when he was tired of tramping. Suppose we go up and take a look at it."

"The trail we are following leads right up there, Wetzel."

"True enough. I suppose the red-skins called in as they passed, but did not find the owner at home, and went on. Has there been a scrimmage about here? I see drops of blood in the trail. No: that must have come from one of the fellows we wounded at the trap."

As the two friends drew nearer to the hut, the signs of a severe struggle were evident enough; for the bodies of three Indians lay near the building, and blood was plentifully sprinkled about.

"There's been a scrimmage here, sure," said the Indian Slayer, as he stopped and took in the whole scene with a glance of his keen eyes. "It has been a right smart scrimmage, and the red-skins have got the worst of it; for they have gone off and left their dead on the ground."

"Do you suppose that your brother, alone, could have beaten off all those Indians that escaped from us at the trap?"

"Shouldn't wonder. He may have had some one to help him, and there's no telling what Martin Wetzel might do alone."

"Perhaps the Indians may still be in the cabin."

"Not likely, unless they had got Martin's scalp, and then they would have been whooping and yelling like crazy men."

Lewis Wetzel was so confident in this belief, that he walked boldly up to the cabin, followed by his companion, and examined the bodies of the savages.

"There is something strange about this," he muttered. "These red-skins have got their scalps on their heads yet, and that is not Martin's way of doing business. Perhaps he was in such a hurry to lay out some more of the rascals, that he thought he would let the scalps wait until he comes back. Let us go in and wait for him, colonel. It can't be long before we hear the whole story. Those red-skins were in bad luck, to meet both of us the same morning."

All this time not a sound had proceeded from the hut, but every thing, in and about it, had been as silent as death, with the exception of the voices of Wetzel and Colonel Lee, who now walked to the door and entered the building.

No sooner had they stepped inside, than there was a rush from each end of the little room, and both the white men were pounced upon and seized by several brawny Indians.

Colonel Lee, surprised by the sudden attack, was pinioned before he could offer any resistance; but Wetzel threw off his assailants, and split the skull of one of them with his ready tomahawk. His struggles accomplished nothing more against such odds, and he was soon overpowered and bound. He was placed in one corner of the room, with two Indians at his side, and Colonel Lee was set in another corner, with a similar guard.

"This was all my fault, colonel," said the Indian Slayer, meekly. "There's something about it that I don't understand; but it's certain that we are trapped. These red-skins will have a grand time over us, if they can keep us."

The Indians, who were nearly twenty in number, then had a consultation among themselves as to the course which they should pursue. Lewis Wetzel, who knew something of their language, had no difficulty in learning the conclusion at which they arrived. The Delawares decided to go back to their village with Colonel Lee; but the Shawnees, who were unwilling to return with so much loss and so little gain, determined to remain where they were for a while, in the hope of discovering the whereabouts of Martin Wetzel and Wethered. Lewis was glad to learn that his brother had escaped from their clutches, and he felt a new hope spring up in his breast.

The separation was soon effected, the Delawares going off

with their prisoner, carrying their dead warriors, and leaving eight Shawnees in the cabin.

Within half an hour two of these went out, to look for signs of the escaped white men, and then Lewis Wetzel, who had been listening in silence to the taunts of his captors, heard the chattering of a squirrel near the cabin. It differed but little from the usual bark of the animal, and did not attract the attention of the savages; but Wetzel's face lighted up with a sudden gleam, as if the noise was full of meaning to him.

Martin Wetzel and George Wetherell, lying quietly on the skins in the little loft, had heard Lewis and Colonel Lee talking outside the cabin, and knew that their unexpected friends were walking into a trap. They would gladly have warned them of their danger; but they feared to stir, lest they, also, should fall into the hands of the savages. George was anxious and uneasy; but Martin, more accustomed to such scenes, patiently bided his time, and sharply watched the proceedings below.

After the Delawares were gone, and only six Shawnees remained in the cabin, he decided that the time had come to attempt the rescue of Lewis. Six Indians, he thought, were none too great odds for himself and Wetherell, especially when the life of his brother was at stake.

He whispered his intention and his plan to his companion, and uttered the squirrel's note that had attracted the attention of his brother. He then quietly removed a few of the poles, until he made a space large enough for his body to pass through, and jumped down into the room below, alighting on the head of one of the savages, and crushing him to the floor. With a wild yell he struck down another with his tomahawk, and dashed at the rest.

The startled savages quickly recovered from their surprise, and seized their weapons to put an end to this bold assault; but Wetherell had followed his friend, with his tomahawk in his hand, and Martin profited by this diversion in his favor, to cut the cords that bound his brother's hands.

Lewis jumped up, seized the tomahawk of one of the fallen Shawnees, and in a moment four of the red-men were dead or mortally wounded in the cabin. The other two ran out,

and found safety in flight, as the white men were not in a condition to pursue them.

"Save your own scalps, Lew," said Martin, as he drew his knife from his belt. "All that George killed belong to me."

"I want to understand this," replied Lewis. "You must tell me what has been going on here."

Martin related what had occurred, during the day, at and about the hut, and received from his brother an account of his own adventures.

"We have work before us," suggested George Wetherell. "We must get Colonel Lee out of the hands of those Delawares, if it is possible to do so."

"That's a fact," said Lewis, "and we must be quick about it. They are mad as hornets, and will want to take all their spite out of the old gentleman."

"Come, then, George," said Martin, "and let us find our guns and put them in order. I can't shoot with any rifle but my own. I shall have to give up this hut, as the red-skins have found it out, and must build another wigwam to dry my scalps in."

CHAPTER VI.

THE WISE WOMAN.

NEAR the forks of the Muskingum, or what is known as White Woman's river, was an Indian village, beautifully situated, well arranged, and neatly built and kept. Its inhabitants were a small portion of the once-powerful tribe of Delawares, whose remnants, after their subjugation by the Iroquois, had been driven westward and scattered over the country. They had remained peaceful and submissive, until the Revolutionary war commenced, when they had taken up arms, and by their bravery had compelled their former conquerors to regard them no longer as squaws, but to recognize them as warriors and braves.

Although they had regained their warlike character, those who were settled north of the Ohio did not engage, as a body,

in any hostile movements against the whites. They were so scattered, and their tribal relations had been severed to such an extent, that they no longer acted in concert, but generally followed the lead of the tribe in whose country they resided. Another hindrance to their hostility was, that the Mingoes, as a branch of the Iroquois, were their hereditary enemies, and lay between them and the Ohio; so that an expedition in that direction was likely to find a fight before reaching the white settlements. Still, there were raiding-parties, which, in connection with the fierce Shawnees, the Miamis or the Wyandots, occasionally invaded Virginia and Kentucky, for purposes of slaughter and plunder.

To the absence of one of these parties must be attributed the quiet that reigned in the village that has been mentioned. Nearly half the young warriors, in fact, had joined a party of Shawnees that had visited them, for the purpose of invading the thinly-settled region of Kentucky. When they went, they expected to be absent about two weeks, and, in the mean time, the warriors who were left behind employed themselves in hunting and fishing, the women attended to the cornfields and their domestic duties, and there was nothing to cause any excitement in the community.

At the end of the village was the residence of the principal man, Minnenund by name, who, although not a sachem by rank, was looked up to as such, and was called by that title. In the middle was the council-house, and at the other end was a small log-building, which appeared to be the residence of some person of distinction.

Within that building was seated a middle-aged woman, who could not easily have been mistaken for an Indian, although there were no traces of civilization in her apparel, and although her face was nearly covered with paint, which was laid on in curious lines, mingled with grotesque figures of animals and birds. Her long robe of dressed deer-skin was embroidered and painted in the same style, and her entire appearance was weird and outlandish in the extreme. Still, her hands had not lost their whiteness, traces of a fair complexion were visible between the lines and figures of paint, and her features were unmistakably such as belong to the Anglo-Saxon race.

She was seated on a stool, at a rude table, on which were a few books, and several sheets and rolls of birch-bark, some of them covered with figures and calculations. At her side, on a large panther-skin, knelt a fair girl, whose years might number twenty or thereabouts, and whose blue eyes, brown and glossy hair, clear complexion, delicate features, and graceful form, were such as belong to a high order of beauty. She also was attired in richly-embroidered garments of dressed deer-skin, and a circlet of gayly-colored feathers on her head showed that she occupied no mean position in the village.

The elder woman was the lost wife of Colonel Lee. The younger was her daughter Annie, whose name had so easily fitted the lips of her savage captors, that they had changed it but slightly, and she was known and famed among them as *Annie*. Her mother, however, had gained another appellation, which, rendered into English, signified the *Wise White Woman*.

"Where have you been since noon, my child, and what have you been doing?" asked the mother.

"Only wandering about the village, and gathering flowers in the forest."

"Has Owaco troubled you again?"

"Not he. The young chief is afraid of his father, Minne-mund, and Minne-mund is afraid of you. Besides, I have always had Onoah as a companion, of late days, and Owaco never troubles me when she is with me."

"Minne-mund is afraid of me, it is true," thoughtfully replied the Wise Woman; "or, rather, he respects the mysterious power that he supposes me to possess; but who knows how long his fear or respect may last? At any moment, by some wrong statement or false prediction, by some failure to do all they expect of me, I may lose my power over him and his people, and then we shall have no protection but the hand of Providence."

"It is wonderful to me, mother, that you have so long kept your hold upon them." --

"I have good reason to be grateful to that sustaining Power which has upheld me through these trials. It was a merciful Providence which caused the Indians to bring in among their plunder that satchel containing the school-books, especially

that astronomy and philosophy, and the almanac of that year. The excellent education which I received in my youth enabled me to use them to good purpose, and to gain the reputation that I have among these people. When I foretold the eclipse, which occurred soon after our arrival at the village, my position was at once settled, and my task afterward was to maintain it."

"It is a task that you have accomplished with wonderful success; but it must have cost you much anxious thought."

"It did; for I was obliged to work upon the ignorance and superstition of the savages, and was continually in fear that my deception would be discovered, and that a fearful fate would befall both of us. Still, I have kept it up, and have succeeded beyond hope. If it had not been for you, Annie, if I had not felt that your existence depended upon my exertions, I should long ago have given up. But, God only knows how soon there may be an end to this, and I pray now, more earnestly than ever, that the time may soon come when I can wash this hateful paint from my face, and escape with you from the power of these savages."

"Have you any good hope that that blessed time may ever come?"

"I have some hope in the Moravian Indian, Father Brainard's pupil, who has twice visited us. He promised to do what he could toward effecting our release; but he is obliged to be careful how he acts, as the other tribes are only too glad of a pretext to attack and enslave his people."

"That is a doubtful chance, and a long look ahead. I am afraid that something may happen very soon, that will put these Delawares out of conceit with their Wise Woman. When the war-party left here with the Shawnees, you told Minnenund that disaster would overtake them, and that they would return within three days. Why did you risk such a prediction, when there was every probability that they would be absent at least two weeks?"

"I could not help saying so, my child. Something told me that it was true."

"The three days are nearly ended, and they have not come."

"Give yourself no uneasiness about it, my child. I am confident that I prophesied truly."

The mother and the daughter sat and conversed upon these subjects, which were so deeply interesting to them, until the sun had set, when a number of Indians, forming a sort of procession, were seen approaching the lodge of the Wise Woman.

"You must leave me, Annie, for a while," said she. "The sachem and his advisers are coming to consult me, probably upon the matter you spoke about a while ago."

"I wish you would let me stay," entreated Annie."

"I must not. You know that Minnenund always desires me to be alone when he comes for a consultation. Go, now, and you may return as soon as they leave."

Annie left the lodge, and in a few minutes Minnenund and several of the old men of the village entered it. The sachem was a fine-looking savage for his age; but he was very old, and his superstition had increased with his years, if his wisdom had not. He and his companions remained standing, until the Wise Woman requested them to be seated, when they ranged themselves, in the order of their age and rank, on a bench at the side of the lodge.

"Why do Minnenund and his old men come to visit me at this hour?" asked the prophetess. "Have they any more young men to send out to death, or do they wish to learn when their country will be blessed with rain? Do they not know that the mind becomes cloudy and dark as the day draws to a close, and that it does not again become clear and bright, until the eyes are touched by the arrows of the sun?"

"We know all this," replied the sachem, with a sly grin upon his usually solemn features, "and we have not come to inquire concerning the future, but the present. We have come to ask some questions which my wise sister will find it hard to answer."

"Let the questions be put, and I will find answers for them?"

The sachem put one leg over the other, and cocked his eye knowingly, after the manner of some civilized persons, when they state a proposition or ask a question which they intend to be a poser.

"My wise sister has told us many things that have proved to be true," said he. "She told us when the sun would be shut out of the sky, and the earth would be darkened in the daytime—which she could not have known unless the Great Spirit had told it to her. We have asked her many questions, and she has always answered them truly, and we have trusted in her, and have honored her as a great medicine. But what shall be done to my wise sister when her tongue becomes crooked, when she lies to us, and we can trust her no longer?"

"Let her die!" calmly replied the prophetess.

"But perhaps my sister did not mean to speak falsely. Perhaps the bad spirit entered into her, and put lying words in her mouth."

"Let the sachem use plain words. Does he know of any instance in which I have spoken falsely?"

"A few days ago there came a party of Shawnees to the village, who persuaded a number of my young men to go with them on an expedition against the whites who live across the Ohio. I asked my wise sister what success the war-party would have, and she told me that they would meet with trouble on the way, and that they would return within three days. I was unwilling that my young men should go; but the Shawnees were impatient, and they could not be held back."

"The words of the sachem are true," replied the Wise Woman. "Does he suppose I spoke falsely in that?"

"The three days are ended, and the young men have not returned, as my wise sister said they would. Has she not spoken falsely? Let her answer, if she can find an answer."

There was a murmur of approbation among the Indians on the bench, as they stirred in their seats, and looked hard at the woman at the table.

"The sachem has found trouble where there was none," answered the prophetess. "I can not think that he would have asked such a question, if he had used the reason which the Great Spirit has given him. The three days are not yet ended. The day is not finished when the sun sets; ten several hours remain before a new day commences. This day

will end when the moon rises. Then let the sachem and his council advisers come to me, and say whether I have spoken falsely."

"We will wait until the rising of the moon, as my wise sister wishes it to be so," said Minnenund, as he drew his blanket about him, and left the lodge, followed by the other old men, who did not seem to be much edified by the information that they had received.

The inhabitants of the Delaware village were unusually wakeful that night. They had heard the prediction of the Wise Woman, and had believed in it until sunset had passed without its fulfillment. When it was announced that the time had been extended until the rising of the moon, they again became anxious and excited. The young men of the war-party had left many relatives behind them, whose minds were agitated by contending hopes and fears, as they watched for the appearance of the luminary of night. As in civilized communities, these had many friends, who were willing to wait with them and console them with ominous predictions; so that there was little sleeping done before the hour of moon-rise.

At last, a little before twelve o'clock, the pale crescent was seen in the horizon, through an opening in the forest. Minnenund and his old men went in triumph to visit the Wise Woman, and reproach her for her false prophecy. They reached the door of her lodge, just as the moon became visible above the tree-tops.

The prophetess had been naturally uneasy while waiting for the moon to rise, and she was not in an enviable state of mind when she saw the Indians approach her dwelling. She had felt a strange confidence in the fulfillment of her prediction, although she had had nothing to found it upon; but, the moon had risen, the day was ended, and the war-party had not returned.

Annie was at her side, seated on the leopard-skin. She was intensely agitated; for she felt that this was a crisis in her mother's fate and her own, and she refused to leave the parent who was so dear to her. It was a trying moment for both; but the mother summoned up all her strength of mind, and geared herself to meet the issue, whatever it might be. She

soothed her daughter's agitation, and awaited the arrival of the Indians with apparent calmness.

Without seating himself, and without waiting to be spoken to, Minnenund pointed triumphantly to the risen moon, and told the Wise Woman that her day was ended, that she could not possibly make it any longer, and that her words had not come true.

"There is the moon," he said in conclusion. "Where are my warriors?"

"Do you hasten at the very instant the day is ended," indignantly replied the prophetess, "to seek to convict me of falsehood? Could you not allow me an hour, or even a few moments' grace? Must every thing happen at the very minute and in the precise manner predicted? You would not expect so much from one of your own race. You ask me where are your warriors. Some of them are sleeping their last sleep, and the rest are here. Yes! you have come here to learn that my words are true, and that your young men have returned. Do you hear that yell?"

The quick and strained ear of the prophetess had caught the sound of a commotion at the lower end of the village, and, at that moment, the scalp-halloo was heard, followed by wailing and shrieking.

In an instant all was excitement throughout the village. Minnenund and his sage followers rushed from the lodge with much less than their usual dignity, and hastened to the scene of attraction.

When they were gone, Annie threw herself into her mother's arms, and burst into tears.

CHAPTER VII.

A BUTTER AND A SCENE.

ANNIE LEE did not leave her mother's side during the remainder of the night after the return of the war-party. So great was her joy at the unexpected fulfillment of the prophecy of the Wise Woman, and at their seemingly providen-

tial deliverance from a great peril, that her mother felt nearer and dearer to her than ever.

Early in the morning, however, she went out to learn the cause of the return of the warriors, and the particulars of the disaster, if any, that had happened to them. She soon returned, bringing the tidings to her mother.

"It was just as you predicted," she said. "They had not got far upon their way, when they came to a place where they were obliged to cross a creek upon a fallen tree. It seems that some enemies had cut the tree partly in two, so that it would fall when any considerable weight came upon it. Part of the Delawares had crossed, and the rest were on the tree with the Shawnees, when it gave way, precipitating several of them into the rapids below. But it fell in such a way that the remainder might have climbed out, if a body of unseen enemies had not commenced yelling and firing upon them. The Indians who had gained the other side of the stream fled from the firing, leaving their friends to get out as well as they could."

"Those who fled went on several miles further, until they saw a smoke, and they soon discovered, to their great surprise, that it came from a little log-cabin, that was built on the side of a hill, near the creek."

"They went up to examine the cabin, and found that it contained two white men, Martin Wetzel, and another whom they did not know."

"Martin Wetzel?" exclaimed the Wise Woman. "That name seems familiar to me. What happened at the cabin?"

"When the Indians could not force an entrance, they set at work to burn the house, and their fire was well under way, when one of the men rushed out and attacked them. They would soon have overpowered him, if the other, whom they had forgotten, had not sprung out like a madman, released his friends, and opened the way for the escape of both. The white men ran down and jumped into the creek, and the Indians did not see them again, nor could they find any trace of them, although they examined the ground carefully, and remained about there for some time."

"Giving up the search at last, they went back to the cabin, and were resting there, when two more white men came in

view, who turned out to be Lewis Wetzel and another man, an old man."

"Lewis Wetzel!" again exclaimed Mrs. Lee. "That was the name of one of the sons of the good man at whose house we were captured. He was carried off as a prisoner, together with one of his brothers, and I supposed they had been murdered, as I saw nothing of them after the first day's travel. I now remember that Martin was the name of the elder brother, who went with your father to the fort. Can these be the same? They were boys then."

"I only know that the Indians called them Lewis and Martin Wetzel, and said that they were among their most hated enemies. Indeed, they seem to fear them fully as much as they hate them."

"Go on, my child."

"The Indians remained in the cabin, and kept perfectly quiet while the white men approached it. They stayed outside a few moments, talking together, and then walked in at the door, when they were pounced upon and captured, after a little struggle. The Indians believed they were a part of the body of men who attacked them at the crossing of the creek, as the belt of one of them was full of scalps."

"Were they brought here as prisoners?"

"Only one of them. Lewis Wetzel was claimed by the Shawnees. The Delawares concluded to come home, while the Shawnees, whose loss had been the heaviest, decided to remain and look for the other two white men. Our warriors returned in safety, with the old man, and that is all the story."

"Is that all, Annie? Your manner seems strange this morning."

"Does it? I told you, mother, that the Indians found in the cabin with Martin Wetzel another white man, whom they did not know. I listened to their description of that man, and of whom do you suppose the description reminded me?"

"I can not guess, my child."

"Of George Wetherell, mother."

"That is mere imagination, Annie. It is not at all likely that George Wetherell would be fighting Indians here in the wilderness. If he still lives, he is far from here, and has forgotten you."

"I am not so sure of that, mother. If he has forgotten me, I have not forgotten him."

Annie buried her head in her mother's lap, and remained in that position until the Wise Woman roused her.

"Come, my child; you must not harbor such thoughts or indulge in such feelings. The enmity that was between your father and Anthony Wetherell forced us to leave the Carolinas, and cost us our liberty. Your father has deeply regretted the act, no doubt; but it is too late to recall it, and we should not allow ourselves to be troubled by vain regrets. Did you learn what is to be done with the old man who is a prisoner here?"

"Last night he was kept shut up and under guard, and this morning they are to begin to torture him. Oh, it is horrible! Can we do nothing to help him?"

"Nothing at all, I am afraid. My influence does not extend to the treatment of prisoners, and I am not allowed to interfere with them. I would willingly risk my own life, to save one of our race; but I can not endanger your safety."

"I wish I could see him. An old man, a prisoner, and to be tortured by these savages! I pity him so much, mother!"

"Perhaps you may get a look at him, if you are quiet and cunning; but you must not show any interest in the matter, and must not allow your feelings to overcome you. Above all, you must not be near the council-house when the torture commences; for I would not have you look upon such a sight."

With her mother's consent, and with a promise to be very discreet, Annie left the lodge, and slowly sauntered down the village street. She had gone but a little way when she was accosted by a tall young Indian, who might have been called handsome, had it not been that his eyes were much too close together, and his countenance nearly always wore a sinister and repulsive expression.

"Has Annie nothing to say to Owaco this morning?" asked the young warrior, as he joined her.

"Nothing that would please you. You should seek Oneola, if you wish to hear pleasant words."

"Has Annilie forgotten her brother ; or does she remember him only to hate him ?"

"I wish that Owaco was truly my brother, and then he would not trouble me by wishing to be something else."

The brow of the young sachem darkened, and there was a malevolent fire in his eyes as he answered :

"Owaco has often offered his love to the white maiden, and she has as often rejected it ; but he has not given her up ; for he knew that the day must come when she will belong to him, and he can do with her as he pleases. This people will not always be ruled by the white woman, who pretends to be a great medicine, and of whom Minnenund is afraid. The sachem is old—it can not be many moons before he will leave us forever ; and then who will stand in his place but Owaco, who is not afraid of the Wise Woman, and who does not believe in her medicine."

Annie shuddered and cast her eyes upon the ground.

"The young sachem will be a different man from the old one," continued Owaco. "Affairs will go on very differently when he is the head of the people. He will have his way and he will be obeyed without trembling at the words of an artful white woman. But he wishes to gain the heart of Annilie, so that she may obey him from love and not from fear. She had better be careful, then, how she speaks to Owaco, so that she may not awake an anger that he might remember hereafter."

Annie looked up in the face of her copper-colored lover, and saw there a threatening expression, which gave her a gloomy foreboding of that hereafter. But she wisely held her peace.

At this moment they were joined by a graceful Indian girl, whose handsome countenance became clouded with melancholy as she saw those two walking together ; but Annie hailed her appearance as a relief from the importunities of her suitor, who muttered to himself discontentedly, and turned away.

"I am glad indeed to meet you, Oneola," said Annie, as she hastened to greet the Indian girl. "Why are you so sad this morning ? The sunshine has left your face, and you look as if you had lost some dear friend."

"The beauty of the flowers is gone when the frost has touched them," replied Oneola. "The heart withers when its love is met with coldness and contempt. Would not the white maiden be sad if her chosen warrior, he whom she had always believed to be her own, should turn from her, and give his love to another?"

"My sister is speaking of Owaco; but she knows well that I do not want his love. He is not of my race, and I can never be his wife, although I am willing to be a friend to him."

"Annie may not love Owaco; but that does not keep Owaco from loving Annie. There is no consolation in that for her who was dear to him before he saw Annie. His heart is taken from Oneola, and is given to the white maiden."

"Oneola must not blame her sister for what she can not help. The love of Owaco is only a trouble to me, and I wish I could never hear any thing more about it."

"I will not blame you, Annie, for what you can not help, though my heart is very hot sometimes. But the time will come when Minnemaad will go to the happy hunting grounds, and then Owaco will take the white maiden for his wife, and Oneola will be forever forgotten."

"That is just what he told me a few moments ago," said Annie.

"He did?" exclaimed the Indian girl, with a jealous glance at her unfortunate rival. "What I had suspected, then, is true. His crooked tongue has spoken plain words to you, and that is what is hid in his heart, keeping him from Oneola."

Annie felt that she had made a false step in thus confirming the suspicions of the Indian girl, and she hastened to soothe the irritation of the latter, and to persuade her that she had no part in those feelings of the young sachem, but they were utterly repugnant to her.

She succeeded so far, that Oneola at last embraced her, and walked close at her side, turning the conversation into another channel.

"Where was my sister going when I met her?" she asked.

"I was only walking out to enjoy the morning air," replied

Annie ; " to see what was to be seen, and to hear what was to be heard."

" Has she seen the white prisoner who was brought in by our young men last night ?"

" No. Is he a sight that is worth seeing ?"

" Perhaps so. As he is a white man, I supposed that Annie would wish to see him."

" Is he not shut up ? Could he be seen before he is led out to the torture ?"

" He is shut up, and no one may go near him but the chiefs and the old men. Yonder is the post at which they are to burn him. You can see him when they bring him out if you will wait near the post."

Annie shuddered, and turned pale.

" I would not go near it for the world," she said.

" But they are not going to burn him yet. He will first be given up to the old women and the boys, to beat him with sticks and to make sport of him, and then the warriors will commence the torture."

" Does Oncola mean to stay and look at it ?"

" Yes. It will be a pleasant sight to me. All the village will be there."

" How can you say that it will be a pleasant sight to you ? How can you have the heart to look with pleasure upon the sufferings of a fellow-creature—such fearful sufferings ?"

" Is he not an enemy of my race ? He has killed many of my people, they tell me, and he was captured in the company of a man who has taken more scalps than any other pale face. I could tear his flesh to pieces, and burn it in little bits before his eyes."

Annie was somewhat frightened at this manifestation of ferocity on the part of her companion ; but she at last consented, after much persuasion, to go to a little eminence that overlooked the spot designated for the torture, and to remain there until the prisoner should be brought to the post.

In the course of half an hour, the white man made his appearance, escorted by several stout warriors, and surrounded by a crowd of women and children, who evinced their mingled delight and indignation by shouts and yells, curses,

kicks and buffets. He was tied to the stake and left to the torture of this rabble, who, if less scientific than the warriors, were no less vindictive and eager to vent their spite upon the hated white man.

The crowd about the prisoner was such, that Annie could not see his face; nor would she have been able, from her position, to distinguish his features. She did not, therefore, object very strongly, when the Indian girl urged her to move closer to the scene, though she advanced with slow and hesitating steps.

The women and children had been beating the prisoner with sticks, kicking him, pinching him, pulling his hair, and inflicting every species of minor torture that their ingenuity could devise; but they had fallen back when Annie and her companion approached, and had given way to the warriors, who were preparing for the great act of the drama.

This was the torture by fire—the burning at the stake.

They tied the white man to the stake with a long rope, so that he might walk around it if he chose, and then commenced to lay piles of hickory-poles around him, placing them at such a distance that he must be continually scorched by the fire, though it could not burn him. All this while the yelling, screaming, and looting made the scene a likeness of pandemonium, and every now and then an Indian would fire a charge of powder into the half-naked body of the helpless captive.

"They are going to light the fire," said Oneola, as she drew her companion nearer to the stake.

Annie covered her eyes with her hand and turned to fly from the horrible sight, when she was arrested by a cry from the prisoner.

He had seen her when she approached the stake with Oneola, had perceived that she was one of his own race, had held out his hands to her in mute appeal, and then called upon her to save him.

There was something in the voice that touched her powerfully. As a white man and a stranger, though she would have been anxious to relieve him from his sufferings, she would have forbore the useless and dangerous attempt; but

that voice reminded her of one who was not a stranger, though it was long years since she had seen him.

She turned, looked toward the stake, and caught a full view, for the first time, of that pleading face and those outstretched arms.

"Father!"

With a cry of love and agony she rushed through the crowd of savages, over the piles of poles and brush, and threw herself into the arms of the prisoner, who clasped her as if that embrace was to be his last.

"Loose him!" she exclaimed, to the warriors who gathered around her. "He is my father, and you dare not burn him! If you harm him, the Wise Woman will bring destruction upon you! The tribe will be accursed from that hour!"

She was torn from his embrace, and, as she was borne away, she saw the fierce countenance of Owaco turned upon her, with an expression of fiendish exultation. She saw nothing more; for she fell to the ground in a swoon.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE AND JEALOUSY

WHEN Annie awoke, she found herself lying on her own couch, in the lodge of the Wise Woman, with her mother bending over her, and watching her tenderly, with an expression of the deepest anxiety.

"What is the matter?" asked the girl, as soon as she was able to speak. "Something terrible has happened, mother. What is it?"

"I do not know, my child," replied the Wise Woman. "They would tell me nothing. When they brought you here, I supposed you were dead; but I soon discovered that you had only fainted."

"Who brought me here?"

"Some Indians; but they would not tell me what had happened to you. As you went from here with the intention of

trying to get a glimpse of the white prisoner, I thought it likely that you had gone too close to the torture-stake, and had witnessed a scene that had caused you to faint."

"Yes, mother, that is it," said Annie, shuddering, and covering her face with her hands. "It comes back to me now, like something that had happened a great while ago. You must know it, but how shall I tell it to you? You will hate me, for being the bearer of such evil tidings."

"You could bring me no news that would make me hate you, Annie. I have borne much, my child, and can bear much more, for your sake. Tell me the worst at once, and rely upon it that God will give me sufficient strength to endure it."

"I went to see the prisoner, mother, and I saw him. They were about to burn him, when I first caught sight of his face; and who do you suppose it was?"

"Not your old lover, I hope, Annie?—not George Wetherell?"

"No, mother. I told you this morning that it was an old man. One who is nearer to both of us than George Wetherell."

"It was not—you can not mean to say—"

"Yes, mother, it was my father!"

The Wise Woman needed all her strength of mind, and all her reliance upon a higher power, to sustain herself in this moment of trial, and to soothe her daughter, who fell into her arms with a despairing wail, and seemed about to renew the fainting scene at the torture-stake.

"I did all that I could do," said Annie, in response to her mother's gentle words. "I ran to him, and put my arms around his neck. I told the Indians that they must not harm him, and I threatened them with you, mother. Did I do wrong?"

"No, my child. It was your father."

"They took me from him, and then I knew nothing more. Have they burned him? Oh, it is too horrible! I shall go wild, mother."

"I can set your mind at ease on that point, thank God! The torture ceased after you were brought home, I know; because there was but little more yelling and hooting, and the

crowd shortly dispersed. Whatever may have been done with him, he was not burned."

"Perhaps he may still be living. Perhaps they were afraid of you, when I told them that you would bring destruction upon them if they harmed him. Perhaps they may give him to us. We must save him, mother. We must forget everything else, and do all we can to save him. What shall we do? You have such a wonderful mind, you can surely suggest something now."

"Yes, my child, I can suggest something. There is one resource that is always left to us."

"What is it, mother?"

"Let us pray!"

When Annie and her mother rose from their knees, their hearts were stronger, if not lighter; their faith was firmer, and their trust in the overruling Providence to whom their prayers had been addressed was worth more than any hope that could spring from their own efforts.

It was agreed between them, after calm consultation, that Colonel Lee had not been killed, but had probably been reserved for the decision of another council. It was also finally agreed that Annie—although her mother assented to this proposition with great reluctance—should go out in the village and endeavor to learn what had been done with the prisoner, and whether his fate had been decided upon.

With this view, she left the lodge, and strayed out among the wigwams, looking for Oneola.

She did not see the Indian girl; but she did see, much sooner than she wished to, and at a time when she would gladly have avoided him, the young sachem, Owaco, who met her before she had gone far, and who approached her with the same expression upon his dark features, though somewhat subdued, that they had worn when she last saw him.

"Where is Annie going now?" he asked. "I had not thought that the Morning Star would shine upon us again to-day."

"I am looking for Oneola," replied Annie.

"Is it because the White Lily is so much fairer than the brown blossom of the forest, that she wishes to be always in her company?"

"Oneeda is beautiful, and you know it. I love her because she is the only friend that I have, beside my mother."

"I thought that Annlie had found another friend this morning. He was an old man, but she put her arms around his neck as if she loved him very much. Did a little bird whisper it to me, or was it Annlie herself who called him father?"

"My father!" exclaimed Annie, quite taken off her guard. "If you have a heart, you will be merciful to him, and you will tell me what I wish to know, so that I need go no further."

"Owaco has a heart, as Annlie ought to know, for it is very big toward Annlie. If she has come out to look for her father, she will find no one who can tell her more than Owaco."

"Tell me, then, I beg you, what has been done with him. Has he been killed?"

"No, he has not been killed."

"Where is he, then? Will he be set free? Will he be given to us? Why do you not tell me?"

"That is what I am about to do. I was wishing to see Annlie, that I might speak with her concerning her father."

"But you do not speak. You are so slow. My heart is bursting with anxiety, and yet you tell me nothing."

"Let Annlie listen. She is too eager and impatient. It is those who wait and listen, who learn what they wish to know. The white hairs of the old man do not yet hang in the wigwam of any of our warriors. He is alive and safe."

"Is he a prisoner? What is to be done with him?"

"Let Annlie listen. When you saw your father this morning, and when you broke in as they were about to burn him, and threatened our people with the anger of the Wise Woman, there was one who was afraid, and who said that the prisoner must not be put to death. That was Minnecund, my father."

Annie's face brightened. Her threats, then, had been powerful, and she had been instrumental in saving the life of her father.

"There were two or three more, among the very old men, who were frightened," continued the warrior; "but those

were all. None of the young men were afraid, and they all demanded that the torture should not be stopped. Minnenund and his old women could not resist the young men; for they had taken the prisoner, and they knew in whose company he had been taken, and how many of their friends he had helped to kill. The young men were angry, and Minnenund and his old women were forced to allow them to do as they pleased with the prisoner."

"But you say that my father is safe," interrupted Annie.

"Let Annilie listen. There was only one who could speak to the young men, and persuade them to let the prisoner live. The gray-haired white man was again bound to the stake, and the piles of sticks were again about to be lighted, when Owaco stepped forward and bade them listen to him. With a few words he soothed the passions of the young men, and induced them to stop the torture and deliver up the white man to him."

"I thank you, indeed," said Annie, rather doubtfully; for she feared that there must be some guile under this show of goodness. "Will his life be spared? Will you give him his liberty?"

"That will be as Annilie pleases," replied Owaco, with a triumphant smile. "If she will have mercy upon him, he will be saved from the torture and from death."

"What do you mean? What can I do?"

"When Annilie becomes the wife of Owaco—when she consents to share his lodge—her father shall live, and shall be free to go where he pleases. If she will not consent, her father shall suffer all the tortures and shall die."

"But Minnenund says—" again interrupted Annie.

"We will not notice what Minnenund says, and we will not ask the Wise Woman. Her medicine is not strong enough to stop the young men when they are angry, and Minnenund knows better than to try to control them. Only one man can save the life of the gray-haired prisoner, and that man is Owaco. If he holds the hands of the young men, your father will live; if he lets them loose, they will destroy him. Owaco is not in a hurry now, as he has the life of the old man in his power, and it depends upon Annilie to save him. He will give Annilie until the next moon to consider. If, when

the new moon is next seen in the sky, she has not become the wife of Owaco, her father must suffer the torture and death."

"Where is my father? Can I see him?"

"He is safe, and is guarded by men whom I can trust—men who are not afraid of the medicine of the Wise Woman. Annie can not see him now. Perhaps the time will come when she may see him. I have spoken."

So saying, the young warrior turned and stalked away, leaving Annie to ponder his promises and his threats.

She felt that he had spoken the truth concerning the power that he had over the life of her father. She knew that her mother's influence, as the Wise Woman had told her, did not extend to the treatment of prisoners, and that she could not persuade Minneman to interfere, even in behalf of one who was so near and dear to her.

Especially would this be the case with a prisoner who had been taken red-handed, direct from the slaughter of a number of warriors, and who had been found in company and partnership with an enemy who was so feared and hated as Lewis Wetzel.

Annie had no doubt that Owaco had spoken the truth, when he spoke so confidently of his ability to save her father or to devote him to destruction. This being settled, it was plain that she must make her choice between her father and Owaco; she must allow her father to be tortured and put to death, or must consent to become the squaw—perhaps the favorite wife, certainly the slave and *Umidge*—of the young sakhem. Owaco had hitherto been prevented by Minneman from taking her by force; but now he had a sure means of compulsion. Before the next moon, she must submit to his wishes, or her father must die.

She determined to return at once to her mother's lodge, to inform the Wise Woman of what she had heard from Owaco, and to ask her how long it would be to the next new moon.

She had gone but a few steps, when she was surprised to see Owaco at her side, as if she had just started out from some hiding-place near at hand, and Annie could not help suspecting that the Indian girl had been listening to the conversation between herself and Owaco.

"Which way is Annilie going now?" asked Oneola. "She came down into the village a little while ago, and now she has turned back."

"I am going to my mother's lodge," replied Annie. "You startled me. Where did you come from?"

"From below. What is it that troubles Annilie? She is sad and thoughtful. Will she tell her sister what is the matter?"

"I was thinking of my father," evasively replied Annie; for she was fearful of again kindling Oneola's resentment.

"Why should that thought trouble you? He is a prisoner; but his life is safe; he is not to be tortured."

"I am not so sure of that. He is in great danger."

Annie spoke carefully and with meditation, dreading to give Oneola even an inkling of Owaco's last threat; but a sudden impulse moved her to tell the Indian girl the whole truth, and to ask her assistance in escaping from the perils that menaced her.

"My father is in great danger, Oneola," she said, "and so am I."

"Of what is my sister afraid?"

"I am afraid of Owaco. I can not tell you how much I am afraid of him, or what good reason I have to be afraid of him. If you feel kindly toward me, Oneola—if you still love Owaco—help me to fly from him—save me from falling into his power—save me from his love, which is terrible to me."

"My sister talks too loud. The birds might carry her words to the ears of Owaco. Let us walk away from the village."

Annie obeyed, and the two girls strayed into the forest, out of sight of the wigwams, where the white maiden, in earnest and impassioned tones, again implored her red-skinned companion to save her from Owaco, to assist her to escape.

"My sister wishes to leave the Delawares, and to return to her own people," said Oneola, quite coldly.

"I do. Will you help me? Then you will be troubled by me no more, and the love of Owaco will be yours."

"Would Annilie wish to go alone?"

"Oh, no! my father and my mother must go with me."

"That would be a great thing to do, to help you and your father and your mother to escape from the village, and to send you safely to your own people. Suppose I could do it, Owaco would be angry with me because you were gone, Minnetonka would be angry because the Wise Woman was gone, and all the young men would be angry because their prisoner was gone."

"They might be angry; but they would not harm you, Oneola."

"Who can say what Owaco will do when the bad spirit is in his heart? Why is it that Annilie is so anxious to leave us? She must have heard something that has frightened her."

"I have always been anxious to leave," replied Annie, fearful that Oneola might guess what had passed between herself and the young sachem, and more than suspecting that she already knew it.

"Annilie has been talking with the young sachem, and he has told her something that has frightened her. Owaco took her father from the young men, when they were about to burn him; but he had some purpose in saving the life of the old man. Does my sister know what that purpose was?"

Annie shook her head mournfully.

"It was not a good one, you may be sure," she replied.

"Oneola is a poor Indian girl, and she is not wise, as Annilie is; but she can guess that there will be a storm when she sees the thunder-clouds. Owaco can do with the old man as he pleases; he can give him life and liberty, or can torture him to death. If Annilie will enter his lodge as his wife, her father shall live; if she will not, the old man must die. Have I guessed well?"

"You have. It is useless to try to conceal it. That is the threat which Owaco has just made, and he will keep his word."

"He will keep his word, and Annilie must consent, for the sake of her father, and she will become his wife—unless—"

"Unless you help me, Oneola—unless you aid me and those who are dear to me to escape from this place, and send us back to our own people. Will you not do so?"

"Oncola will help her sister to escape from Owaco ; but the others she can not help. She can not send Annlie to her people ; but she can send her to a better place."

"What do you mean?"

The meaning of the Indian girl was revealed in her flashing eyes, and found a stronger expression as she seized Annie by the arm, and threw her to the ground. With the spring of a tigress she leaped upon her rival, and covered her mouth with one hand, while the other pointed a sharp and glittering knife at her throat.

"This is the surest way," she muttered. "Owaco will forget her, when he sees her white face no more."

Annie, also, seemed to think that death was the easiest way of escape from her troubles ; for she closed her eyes, and offered no resistance to the murderous attack.

The knife was about to descend, when the hand that held it was seized by a stronger grasp. The weapon dropped upon the ground, and the Indian girl, falling by the side of her victim, burst into tears.

Annie looked up, and at once recognized, in spite of the changes wrought by time and Indian paint, the well-remembered features of George Wetherell!

CHAPTER IX.

DISGUISES.

"Be quiet, George ! I heard something move down there in the valley."

"And I am sure that I saw the eyes of an Indian glisten in yonder thicket."

The speakers were Martin Wetzel and George Wetherell, both of whom, painted and dressed as Indians, were so perfectly disguised, that they could not possibly have been mistaken for white men. Thus attired, the Wetzel brothers often penetrated the Indian country in search of their enemies ; and Martin had now donned his disguise for the purpose of scalp-

hunting, as well as to assist his friend in his search for Colonel Lee and Annie.

They were descending the side of a wooded ridge, thickly covered with dwarf oaks and undergrowth, and with a few tall trees scattered at intervals. At the foot of the ridge was a thicket, through which ran a little watercourse; and beyond that the land sloped up to a plain, covered with a grove of tall trees.

Both, at the same moment, had suspected the presence of an Indian in the valley, and both had sought shelter behind a rock, from the shot that might be expected if they should show themselves.

"Let me draw the Indian's fire, George," said Martin, "and then we will run down and finish him."

The hunter put his rifle and blanket on the end of his rifle, and gradually showed the latter out from behind his cover; but no shot came from the valley, and it was evident that the man was surprised. In fact, George Wetherell, who was looking round a corner of the rock, perceived that their coming had made the same effect, with such good effect that George was upon the point of shooting at what he believed to be an Indian head among the bushes.

"I reckon you may as well shoot," said Martin, when he perceived the object of the aim. "We have the advantage of the fellow, he having two guns, and a shot may make him show himself."

Wetherell leveled his rifle, and fired at the object in the bushes. It fell, but there was no response from the thicket, except a low, mocking laugh.

"That fellow don't mean to be fooled by any common trick," said Wetherell, after a while. "Stay here, George, and I will go down and get him."

"How do you will pick you off, before you can get near him?"

"No, he won't. I shall make a bend down the ridge, and come straight up the valley, so as to bring him between your fire and mine."

"How do I stay right here? Suppose he should move off or break away?"

"If he does, you may get a shot at him and you must do

as you think best. Keep your eyes open, and look out on all sides."

Grasping his rifle in his left hand, the borderer slid out from behind the rock, moving among the bushes, as it seemed to Wetherell, more like a snake than a man. In a few moments he had disappeared from the view of his friend.

Wetherell watched the course that he supposed would be taken by Wetzel; but he saw nowhere any indication of his presence. All was silent, on the side of the ridge, and in the valley, and no one would have guessed that two mortal foes were seeking or avoiding each other among these rocks and bushes.

At one time the young man thought that he saw a movement of the leaves in the thicket; but he did not notice it again, and concluded that his eyes had deceived him. With his rifle ready in his hand, he waited in silence, keeping his eyes intently fixed on the route which he believed had been taken by his friend.

He had waited about fifteen minutes—though it appeared a much longer time to him—and was growing weary of inaction and suspense, when he was startled by two simultaneous yells, in the valley right in front of him.

At the same time, two dark forms started up, quite close to each other, and two guns were discharged. The shots were ineffectual, it seemed; for both disappeared, as if seeking cover to reload.

Wetherell, who had been looking in another direction for his friend, had been so surprised by this sudden occurrence in front of him that he had not thought to use his rifle. Indeed, he would have been afraid to fire, as he did not know which of the dark figures was Wetzel, and which was the Indian.

Again obliged to wait for farther developments before he could act, he resolved to keep a better lookout, and to be more ready with his rifle if another occasion should present itself.

He was too ready; for his finger touched the trigger, and the rifle was discharged harmlessly, just as the Indian broke out from the thicket, rushed up the slope, and took cover behind a large oak at the edge of the plain. The next moment

Martin Wetzel—whom the young man recognized by his style of tying his hair—rose up among the bushes, and sunk down again.

As the scene of action was now so far removed from Wetherell, that he could be of no assistance to his friend where he was, he determined to cross the valley and try to flank the Indian on the plain.

Following, as well as he could, the plan adopted by Wetzel, he worked himself down into the valley, and crawled quietly through the thicket, endeavoring to keep a watch, during this operation, upon the tree behind which the Indian had concealed himself. As for Wetzel, he neither saw nor heard any thing of that wily Indian fighter.

When he reached the other side of the thicket, he found himself about fifty yards from the tree which he had been watching, and he observed it narrowly, to see whether the Indian remained behind it. He was soon convinced by the sight of a lock of hair, blown out by the wind, that the enemy was still there.

But where was Martin?

Happening to cast his eyes upward, Wetherell caught a glimpse of him, concealed among the boughs of a large and gnarled post-oak, which he had climbed for the purpose of getting a shot at the Indian behind the tree. The young man could not imagine how Wetherell had got there without being observed by him; but there he was, preparing to go out upon a branch from which he could get a fair view of his antagonist.

As luck would have it, the Indian also must have caught sight of him at the same time, and divined his purpose; for he quickly changed his position, and held his rifle as if to shoot. Finding his head thus placed in a dangerous position, Wetherell thought it best to give him a warning.

"Look out, Martin!" he shouted. "The red-skin sees you!"

"That's a fact!" was answered, in a voice which was surely not that of a red-skin. "If you are a white man, I reckon that we had better give up this game; so you can get down out of that tree as quick as you want to."

The supposed Indian stepped out from his cover, Martin

hastily climbed down his tree, and the two men were cordially shaking hands when Wetherell came up and joined them.

"I tell you what it is, brother Lewis," said Martin, "I thought you were just the toughest red-skin to get up with, that I had ever yet come across, and I was doubting whether I was going to take your scalp or lose my own."

"When you started up there in the bottom, Martin, I allowed that I was a gone coon-skin. It was lucky for both of us that we were so scared that we throw away our fire. But I would have had you out of that tree pretty quick. That is one of my old tricks, and I am always watching for it."

"Where did you come from, Lewis?" asked Wetherell.

"From above. I have been looking about among the red-skins, and picking up a scalp or two."

"Did you see or hear any thing of Colonel Lee?"

"Can't say that I either saw or heard him; but I followed the trail that I started on, and it brought me to a Delaware village a few miles beyond here."

"Is he there?"

"He was taken there; but I don't know whether he is there now or not. I raised a little disturbance near the village, and thought it best to get out of the way. What news have you brought from below?"

"Good news," replied Martin. "An army of eight hundred men, under Colonel Broadhead, are coming up here to clear out the red-skins in this region. They started from Fort Henry some days ago; but it takes them a long time to get here."

"That is not bad news, as I reckon these fellows here rather take scalps than prisoners. Suppose we join them. What do you say, George?"

"I say that I am going on to that Delaware village, to look after Colonel Lee, if you will put me on the track of it."

"Better not. The chances are that the old gentleman's scalp is drying in some Delaware's wigwag. Besides, you might get into a scrap, and you couldn't get out of it as well as Martin or I could."

"I mean to try it, at all events. As long as there is a chance to help him, I must do what I can."

"Very well. I had no business to give advice where it wasn't asked. What do you say, Martin, to joining those men from Fort Henry?"

"I don't say that I see the use of it. We will find them soon enough, or they will find us. You and I have each lost a scalp this evening, that we thought we were sure of. We must try to make up that loss, before Colonel Brodhead comes along and drives off all the red-skins."

As George Wetherell was determined to visit the Delaware village, no further objection was made to his doing so, and Lewis Wetherell gave him directions as to the course which he should take, and as to his conduct when he should arrive in the vicinity of the Indians. He soon started, leaving his two friends to follow their inclinations, which led them to seek for more scalps.

The young man traveled rapidly; but it was after night-fall when he came in the neighborhood of the village, of which soon he was apprised by the barking of an Indian dog. He tried to recollect the position; but the night was so dark that he could do nothing without incurring too much danger, and he concluded that it would be best to wait until morning. Finding a secure hiding-place in a thicket, he laid down to meditate and to sleep.

He concluded to retain his Indian disguise, although he had but a slight acquaintance with the Delaware language, and the Indians were most anxious to detect if he should be captured. It might, however, be of some use in enabling him to pass undetected, if he should be seen by any of the Indians.

Early in the morning he was awake, pursuing his observations, and it was not long before he discovered that there was quite a commotion in the village. It was caused, as he easily guessed, by preparations to torture a prisoner. He soon concluded that his guess was true, and saw the prisoner brought out. It was a white man, of course, and Wetherell judged that it must be no other than Colonel Lee, although he could not get near enough to see his face.

The young man was filled with anxiety and trouble as the preparations progressed, and felt a strong impulse to mingle

in the crowd, in the hope of being able to assist the old gentleman ; but he was prevented from doing so, by the certainty that his disguise would immediately be penetrated.

While he waited and watched, there was a new commotion among the Indians, who surrounded the prisoner, the nature of which he could not ascertain ; but he at last perceived, to his great relief, that the torture had been stopped, the crowd was dispersing, and the prisoner was being led away. Noticing, as well as he could, the spot to which Colonel Lee was taken, he hastened back to find a hiding-place in the forest, as the Indians were scattering in all directions, and he was fearful of being observed by them.

There was so much excitement in the village during the remainder of the morning, and there were so many of the inhabitants straying about, singly and in parties, that Wetherell did not dare to leave his place of concealment, and he judged it best to make no farther effort until nightfall, when his disguise might be of some service to him.

As he lay there pondering plans for the assistance of Colonel Lee, and listening to the noise of the village, he heard the voices of girls engaged in low but earnest conversation, and was aware that they were approaching his hiding-place.

Soon he heard their footfalls, and curiosity prompted him to look out from his concealment and catch a glimpse of them as they passed. His joy and amazement were great, indeed, when he recognized in one of them the once familiar face and form of Annie Lee, for whom he had sought so long and so vainly.

An Indian girl, almost as handsome, for her race, as Annie herself, was by her side, and Wetherell could easily hear their conversation, although he could not understand it, as it was in the Delaware language.

While the young man remained concealed, considering whether it would be best to disclose himself, and in what manner he should make himself known, the Indian girl suddenly turned upon her fair companion, threw her on the ground, and knocked her over with an upturned knife.

With the quickness of thought, and with the stealthiness of a serpent, Wetherell darted out from the bush, and arrested the hand that was about to deal a fatal blow. The

The girl broke loose from him and fell on the ground, while he raised his lost Annie, and called her by name.

"I had not dared to hope that I would ever see you again, George," said Annie, when the first excitement of recognition was over. "Where did you come from? and how do you happen to be here? Why do you wear that dress and that paint? I mistook you for an Indian until I saw your eyes."

"I came to seek your father, who was captured by Indians and brought to this village, and I have been here since last night. I hoped that I might, by some good chance, assist him to escape; but I did not dream of finding you here. My disguise is useful for traveling in this region; but I am afraid it is far from perfect, as you have penetrated it so easily."

"You could not disguise yourself from me, though it is so long since I have seen you. Had you really not forgotten me?"

"Forgotten you! You have been always in my thoughts. I thought I loved you, Annie, when I was a boy; but I never really knew what my love was, until I became a man. But we must speak now of yourself, of your safety, of your deliverance from those savages. Tell me, in as few words as possible, how you are situated here."

According to her wish, Annie explained the position of her mother and herself, not forgetting to describe the situation in which her father was placed. She also told her lover of the persecution of Oneola, of the threats which he had made with regard to her father, and of the journey of Oneola, from which she had just been preserved.

"You must escape from this," said Weatherell. "The way is open. Will you not fly with me now? I can carry you beyond the reach of danger, and I have friends who are not far from here."

"Would you have me leave my mother and my father?"

"An army is coming up from Fort Henry. It will soon be here, and then they may be released."

"Then we may all be released together. George, where is Oneola?"

"The Indian girl? She has disappeared. Do you suppose she has gone to bring the Indians upon me?"

"It is more than possible. You must fly."

"I ought to have secured her; but it is too late to think of that. Will you not go with me, Annie?"

"I could not, now, if my duty would allow me to go. Fly, George! You have no time to lose!"

The young man grasped her hand, and turned away; but he was too late; he found himself surrounded by Indians, who at once seized him and bore him off in triumph.

CHAPTER X.

A STRANGE WARRIOR.

THE savages had no difficulty in coming to a decision with regard to the fate of George Wetherell. The young men had had one victim taken away from them, and it seemed to them a particularly fortunate chance that had thrown another into their hands. Having secured Wetherell, they determined that the full amount of their vengeance should be visited upon him.

Besides, the young man was well and unfavorably known to them; for he was immediately recognized, when the paint was washed from his face, as the same who had been found in the hut with Martin Wetzel, and who had so strangely escaped from their grasp upon that occasion.

Instead of being shut up in a wigwam and grabled, as had been done with Colonel Lee, Wetherell was stripped nearly naked, and laid upon his back on the ground, where his hands and feet were drawn out and secured to stout stakes. In this painful position he was compelled to remain the entire night.

The morning witnessed another excitement in the village, caused by the arrival of a strange Indian, who came alone, but in the dress and the paint of the Delawares, and the full paraphernalia of a chief.

He announced himself as Captain John, a Delaware chief from the region of the Sandusky, and he counted for his military and disappointed condition by saying that he had been with a few warriors, on an expedition against the Long knives

in Kentucky ; but his party had been beaten and pursued, and he alone had escaped.

When Captain John was informed that there was a white prisoner in the village, who was that day to be put to the torture, his joy was so great that he did not attempt to express it, but allowed it to burst forth in the most extravagant manifestations. His friends and brothers had been slaughtered by the whites, he said ; he would be obliged to go home alone, without a scalp in his belt, to tell the mournful tale ; and no man could be more rejoiced than he would be, to be able to execute vengeance upon the hated race.

He requested that the prisoner might be brought before him, saying that he was pretty well acquainted with the language of the Long-knives, and that he would, therefore, be better able to taunt and irritate the victim, than his brothers of the village.

Wetherell, accordingly, was led up and tied to a stake, and the stranger chief was placed in front of him, while the warriors of the village gathered around, to witness and enjoy the scene.

The young white man, calm and defiant, submitted in silence to the arrangements of his captors. He knew that he was to be subjected to the severest tortures and finally put to death ; but his demeanor was firm and unconciliating.

Captain John stepped up to the prisoner, stared at him a few moments, with a vindictive and exultant expression, and spit in his face. He then stepped back about ten paces, drew his tomahawk from his belt, and, after a few flourishes, launched the weapon at Wetherell's head. The sharp edge struck the stake, and the ax hung quivering in the wood, within an inch of the cheek of the young man, who did not wince or move a muscle, as far as the watchful Indians could perceive.

"Can the Long-knife beat that?" asked Captain John, speaking in the English tongue, as he advanced and drew the tomahawk from the stake.

"Easy enough," replied Wetherell, with a disdainful smile. "Give me a chance to throw the tomahawk at your head, and you will see that I can do much better. You tried to kill me, you red-skinned fool, and you missed your aim."

"You will see how much Indian miss his aim," replied the

warrior, picking up a chip, which he placed upon the head of the prisoner, leaning one end against the stake.

Withdrawing to a greater distance this time, he raised his rifle, leveled it at Wetherell's head, and fired with a careful aim. The chip flew into fragments, and the young man involuntarily put his hand to his head, as if he had been hurt.

This action extorted a yell of delight from the Indians, who rushed up to examine the effect of the shot, and found the bullet imbedded in the stake, so close to the prisoner's head that it did not seem possible it could have missed it. The strange warrior was congratulated upon his excellent marksmanship, which had caused the white man to give a sign that he was not made of marble.

"Did Injun miss his aim?" asked Captain John. "The Long-knife is a liar and the son of a liar."

"You are a dog and the son of a dog," scornfully replied Wetherell. "A squaw or a boy can shoot at a chip, or throw a tomahawk at a man who is bound to a stake; but you are too much of a coward to fight me when I am free and have a weapon in my hand."

The only reply of the Indian was to cut the bands of the young man, and to place a tomahawk in his hand.

Wetherell stretched his arms, to make sure that he was free, grasped the tomahawk firmly, and rushed upon his tormentor, determined to attack so fiercely that some of the savages would be forced to give him a death-blow, and thus save him from the horrid torture that awaited him.

Hardly had he made a step forward, when the tomahawk was knocked from his hand, and he was seized around the body by two brawny arms, lifted up into the air, and whirled about, kicking and struggling, as if he was a child.

When Captain John had satisfied himself and the crowd of Indians by this exhibition of his strength, he quietly replaced his burden upon the ground, amid the shouts and roars of the warriors, and the yells and howlings of the squaws and children.

Wetherell was so astonished at what he had seen and felt, and so mortified at having been so easily overcome in such a contest by an Indian, that he could not conceal his chagrin. He stood where he was placed, silent and crestfallen,

greatly to the delight of the savages, who exulted beyond measure in the triumph of the strange warrior.

"What does the Long-knife think now?" asked Captain John. "Is Injun a coward and a dog?"

"I didn't think there was any red-skin living who could do that thing," muttered Wetherell; "nor did I believe that there was more than one white man in these parts who could do it."

"Perhaps the Long-knife can run, as he can't fight," suggested Captain John.

Wetherell made no reply.

"He can run from his enemies, if they will let him. When he is scared mighty bad, he can run mighty fast."

The Indian looked around at the encircling warriors, and at Wetherell with a glance that made the young man start and gaze at him in wonder.

"He will have a chance to run, and he may live if he uses it well," said the warrior, and then Wetherell saw that the Indians were forming two parallel lines, through which he must run the gantlet.

The lines, when completed, were composed of men, women and children, all armed with sticks, whip, and other weapons that could inflict pain without causing death. It was somewhat more than a quarter of a mile in length, terminating near the council-house.

To the extremity of this line Wetherell was taken, and was told that if he could succeed in reaching the council house, his life would be spared. Although he did not believe this assurance, he determined to do his best, and started forward like a deer.

He was, indeed, a splendid runner, and he not only desired to remove the ignominy of his late defeat, but he had a wild hope of safety, which he could not account for.

From both sides of the line he was struck at as he passed. Sometimes he felt the blows; sometimes he could not avoid them; and sometimes, by a dexterous and vigorous kick or spring, he succeeded in discomfiting an antagonist who pressed too closely upon him. Those who thought that they could overtake him as easily as Captain John had done, found themselves sadly mistaken.

As he drew near the end of the line, not much the worse for the buffeting he had received, he saw Captain John awaiting him there, with his tomahawk in his hand, as if prepared to deal a fatal blow.

Knowing that he must meet this last and worst of his assailants, Wetherell rushed at him, hoping to catch him off his guard and disarm him; but the warrior seized him, and held him firmly in his arms for a moment, and then released him.

"Run for your life!—to the east!" was whispered in the ear of the captive during that moment of time.

Captain John fell to the ground, as if he had been thrown, while Wetherell darted forward, turned the council-house, and, with a glance at the sun, whose light had again become dear to him, ran rapidly toward the east.

The hue and cry was instantly raised, and a crowd of warriors started in pursuit, with Captain John at their head. Wetherell ran his best—he was running for life—and soon gained the shelter of the forest, from which he glanced back at his pursuers, far in advance of whom was Captain John.

He did not stop, but continued his headlong flight, until he came upon the summit of an eminence, from which he again looked back. He saw his pursuers in the valley below, and knew, from their manner of running, that they fully expected to tire him down. Toiling up the slope, and coming on him rapidly, was a solitary Indian; but Captain John was nowhere visible. Surprised at this, Wetherell looked again, and was still more surprised to see Captain John dart out from behind a tree, knock down the solitary runner with a tomahawk, coolly take his scalp, pick up his rifle, and run on toward the east.

The Indians in the rear raised a howl of rage, and Wetherell again started to fly, when he was called by name, and he turned and waited for Captain John to come up.

"In the name of God! who are you?" he asked, as the warrior reached his side.

"Lewis We'zel. Don't you know me?"

"I would not have believed it possible; and yet, I thought there was no other man whose strength was like yours. What shall we do now?"

"Run. Do you feel like running?"

"I was very tired a few moments ago; but I can run now."

"Follow me, then, and I will engage that these redskins will soon see the last of us."

They followed the two Indians cautiously through the night, with the Indians looking back behind them, until, at the distance of a few miles, they came to a dark and shallow pond, in the midst of a swamp, into which the Indian Sayer plunged, followed by Wetherell.

The water was not more than waist deep, and they easily waded through it, until they reached a large tree, which grew on a small hill back, nearly in the center of the pond. Putting down their tall grass at the foot of the tree, Wetzel disclosed a small opening in the trunk, into which he and his friend squeezed their bodies, and found themselves in a hollow, which was abundantly large for both of them to stand upright, and even to move about.

"The redskins will never look for us here," said Wetzel. "I could not have supposed; but I knew that you were too tired to run much farther. I found this place one day when I was hunting a deer, and I stopped here as I went on, and hid my rifle. Here it is, you see, and you can take this Indian's gun. We may need them both."

"How did you happen to come to help me? Did you know that I was a prisoner?"

"Can't say that I know it; but I felt sure of it. Martin wanted to come and help you out of the scrape; but I wouldn't let him."

"Are we safe here? I am so tired that—really, I can't keep my eyes open."

"If you can sleep standing up, do so. You are safe."

Thus comforted, Wetherell soon fell asleep, while the young and smiling of the bearded Indians, at and about the pond, could plainly be heard. He had slept nearly two hours, and the noises had all died away, when he was awakened by his friend.

"Come, George," said Wetzel; "wake up, and let us be moving. The redskins have given us up and gone back, and our way is clear now."

"Are you sure of that? Hark! I thought I heard an Indian yell. Yes; and there is another, and another."

"You are right, my boy. They must have started some other game. Let me look out, and perhaps I can guess what is the matter."

CHAPTER XI.

ONEOLA'S REPENTANCE.

ANNIE LEE was almost stupefied when George Wetherell was overpowered by the Indians and torn from her side. The captivity of her father; his reprieve from death; the threat of Owaco, from which there seemed to be no escape; the jealousy of Oneola, and the Indian girl's attempt upon her life; the sudden appearance of Wetherell, in time to rescue her from the knife; and last, if not worst, the capture of her lover, and the certainty of his fate—all these were enough to stupefy her, if not to deprive her of reason.

For upward of half an hour she sat upon the ground, unable to comprehend what had happened, much less to reason upon it. At last the whole extent of the trouble rushed upon her, and, overwhelmed, she found relief in tears.

She knew that she could be of no assistance to George, whose fate, if not already sealed, it was beyond her power to avert. She herself needed assistance and advice, and there was only one earthly friend to whom she could apply—the mother whose protecting shield had been over her during years of trouble and danger, and who possessed her love and her confidence to so great an extent. She hastened, therefore, to the lodge of the Wise Woman.

Her mother, when she gradually gathered the whole truth from Annie's incoherent statements, though surprised and pained, could offer her child but poor consolation. Troubles seemed to be gathering thickly about her, and she could see no issue from them, except in reliance upon that Almighty Being who has promised to aid the weak and helpless.

It was soon evident to her that Annie was not in a condition to be benefited by any advice. The poor girl was already in a burning fever, and in a short time her brain became disordered, and her situation was such as to require her mother's greatest care and watchfulness.

The Wise Woman, fortunately, was skilled in the use of the medicinal herbs that the forest afforded, and kept a good store of them in her lodge. Of some of these she made a tea, which she gave to Annie, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing her daughter sink into a troubled slumber.

Annie was so far recovered in the morning, that she was able to sit up and converse with her mother upon the events of the previous day; but the Wise Woman strove to turn her mind from her troubles, and to solace her in her affliction, although herself fully in need of strength and consolation.

To this end, she kept Annie shut up in the lodge, and endeavored to prevent her from gaining knowledge of what was passing in the village. This was no easy matter, as there was a great noise and excitement, and Annie imagined that every yell was the death-cry of her lover.

Thus they waited during the long hours—the grieving mother and her agonized daughter—and were not disturbed by any one, until the door was softly opened, and Oneola timidly entered the lodge. Annie started and shrieked, as if she feared another attempt upon her life, and the Wise Woman rose to defend her daughter from the intruder.

"You need not be afraid," said the Indian girl, sinking upon the floor before them. "Oneola has no knife, and, if she had, she would send it into her own heart, rather than into yours. A bad spirit entered into Oneola yesterday, and made her try to take the life of her sister; but it is driven out now, and she is very sad and sorry. Can not her sister look upon her kindly, and forgive her?"

"I might," replied Annie, doubtfully; "but you have killed one whose life was dearer to me than my own. You brought the Indians upon him, and they will slay him, if they have not done so already."

"As the Great Spirit shall judge me, I did not do that," earnestly exclaimed the Indian girl. "I told no one that he was there, by word, or look, or action. I went away, because my heart was hot and my head was wild. I have come now to help Annie, if she will let me."

"Can you help him? Can you save him from death?"

"He is safe! He has escaped."

"Almighty God be thanked!" exclaimed Annie, rising and

clasp the Indian girl in her arms. "How did he escape? Are they in pursuit? Do you really think he is safe?"

"I can not tell you now. We have no minutes to waste in talk. Does Annie wish her father to escape? Now is the time to help him."

"Will you help me, Oncola? What shall I do?"

"Nearly all the warriors have gone to chase the young white man, and the old man can easily escape, if we can get him out of the wigwam in which he is confined. Come with me, and I will dress you as an old squaw, and we will go to the wigwam with something to eat. I will say that Oawco sent me, and they will let us go in. Then we will dress the old man as a squaw, and he will go forth with Annie, while Oncola will take his place in the wigwam."

Annie looked at her mother with radiant eyes.

"You are too weak for the enterprise," said the Wise Woman.

"I am not weak now, mother. I am strong and happy."

"I suppose you must go, my child. It is for your father's life, the plan is a good one, and Providence seems to direct you. I will pray God to bless and help you."

Annie embraced her mother, and left the lodge with Oncola. In a short time they issued from a neighboring wigwam, one carrying a wicker-basket and the other a wooden bowl. Oncola wore her usual attire, and Annie, dressed as an old squaw, was so perfectly disguised, that only a very close examination could have detected the counterfeit.

"I must be the one to remain behind, while you go forth with my father," said Annie, as they walked through the village. "He is not your father, and it is not right that you should risk your life to save him."

"Oncola tried to take the life of her sister," replied the Indian girl. "It is no more than just that she should suffer something for such an act."

As they had now nearly reached the hut in which Colonel Lee was confined, Annie forbore to press the subject, and left to Oncola the task of speaking to the guard.

As the Indian girl had predicted, they had no difficulty in obtaining admission to the hut, as she told the men who were guarding the prisoner that they had been sent by Oawco, and the name of the young sachem at once opened the door.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Colonel Lee, as Annie, unable to contain herself, threw her arms around his neck.
 "Be off, old woman."

"Father!" whispered Annie, with her lips close to his ear.
 "Be quiet! Don't speak a word! It is Annie, your own Annie, and we have come to save you."

Holding back the head that lay upon his breast, and looking into her eyes, the astonished old gentleman recognized, through stain and paint, the features of his lost daughter.

"Is it really you, my child?" he said, in low but earnest tones. "It was not a vision, then, that burst upon me when I was bound to the stake, and the torture-fires were ready to be kindled. Your appearance was so unexpected, your words and manner were so strange, and the scene passed so quickly, that I almost believed I had dreamed it."

"You are awake, father, and it is no dream. This is Annie who is in your arms."

"I must believe what I can see and feel. I hardly dare to ask it: but I must know whether your mother is alive."

"She is. She is safe and well. It is you alone who are in danger, and we have come to save you. Let us speak of that only: for the moments are precious."

Annie briefly outlined the plan of escape, and ended by removing part of her disguise, and placing it upon her father.

"But I can not save myself by sacrificing this friendly girl," protested Colonel Lee. "If she remains here in my place, the savages will destroy her."

"No father," replied Annie. "She will not remain. She proposed to do so: but it can not be. I will remain, and I have no fear of the Indians."

"Ouchia will stay," said the Indian girl. "She owes a life to her father, and the danger must be her."

"But it is impossible, Ouchia. You came in with the old woman, and the warriors saw you and spoke to you. If you should not go out as you came, they would at once know that something was wrong."

The Indian girl was obliged to confess that Annie was right.

"But they will kill you, my child," again protested Colonel Lee. "I will not save my life at the expense of yours."

"There is no danger, father. My mother has great power

over these people, and I am not afraid of them. Give me the walnut stain, Oneola, and help me with this hair."

In a few moments Colonel Lee was metamorphosed into an ugly old squaw, and, with a parting embrace from Annie and an injunction to stoop in his gait, he left the hut with Oneola.

The Indian girl and the supposed squaw went out without exciting any suspicion, and passed quietly through the village. When Oneola was sure that they were not observed, she turned off into the forest with her companion, and led him a quarter of a mile from the village, where she took leave of him, bidding him make the best use of his liberty, as it could not be long before his flight would be discovered.

Colonel Lee turned toward the east, and traveled rapidly through the wilderness. The prospect before him was quite obscure; but he had his liberty, and his heart was full of hope.

He had not gone a mile, when he stopped to throw off the squaw's garments, as they incumbered his limbs. While he was thus engaged, an Indian, returning from the unsuccessful pursuit of George Wetherell, came suddenly upon him, and seized him as a suspicious character. By a powerful effort, Colonel Lee threw off the Indian's grasp, wrested his tomahawk from his hands, and dashed out his brains.

By this means the fugitive became possessed of a rifle and ammunition; but the Indian, in falling, had uttered a yell, that was caught up by half a dozen throats in the forest, and faintly answered from near the village. In a few moments the woods were vocal with savage yells, and Colonel Lee knew that he must run for his life.

CHAPTER XII

A STERN CHASE.

"WHAT do you see?" asked George Wetherell, as Wetzel looked out of the hole in the large tree.

"Nothing at all, and the yells seem to be getting farther to the southward. The red-skins are not upon our trail, sure. Let us go ashore and look after them, George. Perhaps we may get a chance to pick off one or two."

"You are a queer fellow, Lewis," said Wetherell, when they reached the main land. "You talk of shooting those Indians as if it were a matter of everyday business."

"So it is. If you had the wind of a herd of deer, that were moving off as those red-skins are, you would follow them up, expecting to drop a fine buck. Hunting red-skins is my business, George."

"Your actions prove it. But I would like to know why you treated me so roughly when I was a prisoner, before you gave me a chance to run. Why did you show off your skill with the tomahawk and rifle, and why did you handle me like a baby?"

"Didn't really mean to hurt your feelings, George; but I had to get on the right side of the red-skins, and make them believe that I was somebody. I must admit, too, that I did take a little pleasure in bothering you. I must have my bit of fun now and then."

"Was there no way of getting me clear, without running me through that gantlet?"

"None at all. I watched all the chances, and that was the plainest way. Your legs needed a little stretching, you know."

"But my back did not need so much beating."

"Hush, George! the yells are coming this way again, and they are getting louder and mighty fast. The red-skins must be gaining on their game, whatever it is. Lie down here, George, with your ear to the ground, and keep perfectly quiet."

Wetherell sat as he was requested, and was soon convinced that he could hear rapid but uncertain footfalls, like those of a man who was nearly wearied out with running, and he imagined that he also heard the panting of the runner. In a moment more he was certain of this, and he rose to his feet with Wetzel.

"Be ready with your gun," said the Indian Slayer. "The game is near, and the hunters are not far behind."

"It is Colonel Lee!" exclaimed Wetherell, as a man came into view, running slowly and painfully, as if every step might be his last. He had a gun in his hand, and seemed to be uncertain as to whether he should stop and use it against two Indian runners, who were gaining upon him at an easy gait.

"You are right," said Wetzel, "though he don't look much like a white man. Take a tree, George, and watch me; for we must help him pretty soon. He is nearly worn out, and those red-skins think they are certain of catching him."

Wetzel and Wetherell each took cover behind a large tree, and watched the pursuit with intense eagerness.

The old gentleman, casting a glance backward, and perceiving how rapidly and easily his enemies were gaining upon him, made a last effort, and ran forward, until he nearly reached the trees behind which his two friends were standing. With a mocking laugh his pursuers pressed on, and then he apparently resolved to die bravely and send one of his foes to the spirit-world before him; for he stopped, turned around, and raised his rifle. If Lewis Wetzel had been in his place and in his condition, he would have supported him against a tree; but Colonel Lee was not woodman enough to practice that expedient. The effort was too much for his strength, and he fell helplessly to the ground. The Indians quickly ran forward to seize him.

That was the moment for the Indian Slayer. Motioning to Wetherell to follow him. He rushed upon the savages with uplifted tomahawk, just as one of them was bending over the fallen man, and the other had reached his side. With one blow he split the skull of the Indian who was standing up, and fell upon the other and killed him before he could rise, and before Wetherell had a chance to act.

Colonel Lee looked up, and, recognizing Wetherell, felt that he was saved, and rose to his feet with renewed strength.

"That was what I call quick work and good work," said Wetzel, as he drew his knife to remove the scalps of his victims. "There's every thing in the surprise with a red-skin. These fellows didn't have a chance to howl, or they would have brought the whole pack on us right away. Colonel Lee, you are too tired to run any further; but we will take care of you. George, carry him to our hiding-place in the pond, and tell him to stay there until we can draw off the red-skins and come back to look after him. Then do you come over to the other side of the pond, and wait for me. I will keep off the red rascals until you do that much; but you had better be as quick as you conveniently can."

Wetherell took Colonel Lee by the arm, and led him through the forest to the pond, and through the water to the hollow tree, receiving, as he went, a brief account of the old gentleman's escape, and giving him the first information that he had had of his own captivity and rescue. When he had placed him safely in the tree, he hastened to the other side of the pond, and waited for Wetzel.

In a few minutes he heard the yells of Indians over the water, and he knew, from the location and character of the sound, that they had found the scalped bodies of the two runners. Directly afterward he heard the crack of Wetzel's rifle, followed by a succession of yells, and then his friend came plunging through the brush.

"I looked over one of those red-skins," said he; "but I couldn't stop for his scalp. They are after us, George, as mad as hornets, and we must give them a run for it."

Setting the action to the word, the Indian Slayer dashed off through the forest, followed closely by his friend.

Wetzel had not half-expressed the truth, when he said that the savages were as mad as hornets. The sudden disappearance of Colonel Lee, of whose capture they had supposed themselves certain, was partly accounted for when they found the bodies of the two warriors who had fallen under Wetzel's hand. While they were wondering at this unexpected occurrence, and examining the ground about the slain, the rifle of their friend brought down another of their number, and they recognized him as he dashed out from his cover, although he still wore his Indian disguise. They knew the crack of that rifle, and the peculiar yell with which he announced his triumph. They judged that Wetherell must be near, and it amazed them beyond measure to think that two such enemies, evading their pursuit, had been hiding in the woods, and had already done such damage. Wild with rage, they retraced Wetzel's track, howling and yelping like a pack of wolves, and hoping soon to overtake the fugitives, whom they supposed to be incumbered with Colonel Lee.

They were not so incumbered, however, owing to Wetzel's fire-thought; but were comparatively fresh; while the Indians, in their deadly pursuit, had been running for a long time. Wetherell had been celebrated, from his boyhood, as a

runner and leaper; and Wetzel, in addition to his great muscular strength, was wont to boast that he could beat the best Indian runner.

After running at the top of their speed nearly a mile, they perceived that they had easily distanced their pursuers, and Wetzel proposed that they should stop and rest awhile.

"We have drawn the redskins away from Colonel Lee," said he. "The old gentleman is as safe as a squirrel in his hole, and we have only to look out for ourselves."

"We will find it easy enough to do that," said Wetherell, "if we run as well as we have been doing, and the Indians run as badly as they have been doing."

"It is our duty, then, as a matter of business, to take cover here, and wait until they come up, when we will give them a dose of pills to keep them from running too hard."

In a little while the foremost Indians came in sight, and received the dose that Wetzel had spoken of, one of them being forever cured of running, and the other badly wounded. Again the white men started forward, leaving their tired enemies far behind.

Once more this strategy was attempted; but the Indians were more wary, and only one of them was wounded. Still they kept howling and yelping on the track, in no wise disheartened, and Wetherell began to wonder if the chase would never be given up.

"This is what I call the best sport in the world," said Wetzel, as they trotted along briskly. "To feel ourselves perfectly safe, and to stop and pick off those red rascals when we feel like it, is a great comfort, to my notion."

"I can't understand, for my part, why they continue to follow us," replied his companion. "They must hope to come up with us."

"You are right, my boy. They are running us into a trap, and I had not thought of it. We shall have to cross the creek at the place where I spoiled their bridge. They know it, and expect to catch us before we get across. We must give up our sport, and must use our legs to some purpose."

Feeling their danger, the fugitives ran as fast as they could, and soon reached the creek. They were about to climb down the side of the chain, in order to get upon the fallen tree,

when a number of white men started up on the other side of the creek, and fired upon them. In vain they held up their hands, showing that they were friends, and used every effort to make known their true character. They looked like Indians, and the men, who proved to be the advanced guard of Colonel Bretnor's command, were determined not to be deceived by spies.

At the same moment the pursuing savages began to come up, and the situation of the fugitives had become truly desperate, when another man, whom they recognized as Martin Wetzel, appeared on the other side of the creek, and turned the fire of the rangers against their real foes. Lewis Wetzel and his companion then descended the cliff, and began to cross on the tree.

But the Indians were not to be so easily baffled. Finding themselves so near to such a hated enemy as Lewis Wetzel, they determined to kill him, if possible. Rushing to the edge of the cliff, they fired at the men on the tree, in spite of their enemies on the other side. Wetzel was so badly wounded, that Wetzel was obliged to seize him, to prevent him from falling off. Then the Drawny Borderer threw his friend over his shoulder, as if he had been a sheep, and fairly ran with him up the rugged tree, safely reaching his friends.

The Indians soon fled before the fire of the rangers, who crossed over and pursued them until night, when Lewis Wetzel led a party to the pool, and extricated Colonel Lee from his hiding-place.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WISE WOMAN'S RESOLVE.

As One had supposed, it was not long before the escape of Colonel Lee was discovered. The Indians who had been placed to guard him, noticing that it was more quiet than usual within the fort, looked in and saw that their prisoner was gone. Perceiving Annie seated quietly in a corner, they at once guessed the imposition that had been practiced upon them, and were angry enough, as she afterward expressed it, "to eat her." They did not attempt such a feat, however:

but contented themselves with shutting her up and leaving her to be dealt with by Owaco. Then they immediately gave the alarm, and all the available men who were left in the village started in pursuit.

Oncola, who had no idea of leaving her friend in the lurch, went at once to Minnenund, whom she told that the Wise Woman desired to see him immediately. She then hastened to Annie's mother, whom she fully informed of what had happened.

When Minnenund arrived at the lodge, therefore, the Wise Woman at once used her influence with him to procure Annie's release. She had no difficulty in doing so, as the sachem had been willing to save the life of Colonel Lee, it not to suffer him to go free. Owaco and the young men being absent, Minnenund went immediately and released Annie, who returned to her mother's lodge.

It was already known in the village that Wetherell had escaped from his pursuers, together with the spy who had assisted him, and who was now believed to be no other than Lewis Wetzel, who was feared and hated by every red man who had heard of him. This fact was reported by some of the runners who had joined in the pursuit, and who had returned when it proved to be ineffectual.

Wetherell having got clear, Annie and her mother had no present trouble, except their anxiety for the fate of their father and husband, and they had reason to hope that he, also, might have eluded the vigilance of his enemies. Annie, it is true, still had the fear of Owaco before her; but Wetherell had told her that a force was coming from Virginia to rescue them, and she believed that her troubles would soon be ended.

As the evening wore away, they learned, to their great joy, that Colonel Lee was safe, having been met and preserved by Wetherell and Lewis Wetzel, who had slain two of the best runners of the village. The warriors who brought this news, also reported that the Delawares were in hot pursuit of the white men, with a good prospect of capturing them; but neither Annie nor her mother believed in any such prospect, and they devoutly thanked God for the safety of those who were so dear to them.

It was Oonah who brought these tidings to the lodge, as they were received in the village. She appeared to take great pleasure in bringing good news to Annie, and in cheering up her spirits and those of her mother.

The great sensation was reserved for the early part of the night when the warriors began to return, singly and in companies, from the pursuit of Colonel Lee, and from the second chase after Wotah and Wotahell. They brought with them the heads of some of their slain, and were a very weary, jaded and afflicted set of Indians.

Immediately upon the arrival of the first, howling and wailing commenced in the village, and the lugubrious noises continued and increased, as more came in, until that spot in the wilderness became literally a "howling" one.

It was not long before they found a more serious business than howling to occupy their attention. The warriors reported that they had been met and driven back by a large body of white men, so numerous that it was impossible to meet them, and had pursued them for some distance and who might be expected to reach the village at any moment. The scouts who had remained behind to observe the movements of the enemy, came in after a while, with more accurate knowledge of the strength of Colonel Brooks's force, and stated that the white men had encamped for the night, but might be expected to reach the village before the middle of the next day.

There nothing was thought of but flight. The howling and wailing were suspended, and all set at work, abandoning their wigwags and encampments, to save such articles of personal property as they could carry away. The horrors of war were coming to their own homes, and they were about to feel the vengeance of the white men.

Annie, Lee and her mother, seated together in the lodge, passed some anxious minutes, as they were related by Oonah, with a mixture of joy and apprehension. They were rejoiced to learn that their countrymen were really coming to their rescue at last; but were oppressed by the fear that the Indians in their flight, would carry them beyond the reach of their friends. This fear became a certainty, when Oonah informed them that instant flight had been determined upon,

and that Minnenund had set guards about the lodge. Having given this information, the Indian girl left them, to make arrangements for her own departure.

Left to themselves, the mother and daughter debated the matter earnestly and anxiously. It was certain that Minnenund would not be separated from his Wise Woman, in whom he trusted more implicitly than ever, since the fulfillment of her last extraordinary prediction. It was equally certain that Owaco intended that Annie should be the companion of his flight, wherever he should be forced to go. Carried further into the Indian country, they would be doomed to they knew not how many more years of servitude.

"Can we not escape, mother?" asked Annie. "There is a great disturbance in the village, all the Indians are occupied with their own affairs, and we might slip out into the woods, and hide there until our friends come."

"Did you not hear Owaco say that guards had been set around the lodge? Minnenund does not intend that we shall escape, and it is useless to make the attempt?"

"What shall we do, then? Must we submit to be carried away as captives, when our friends are so near us?"

The Wise Woman bowed her head upon her hands, and remained silent for a few moments, buried in thought. Then she rose to her feet, with flashing eyes and compressed lips, and with an expression of strange and stern resolve upon her fine but discolored features.

"My resolution is taken!" she exclaimed. "Once more I will use my influence with these savages, and this last exhibition of my power shall be one that they will remember, if they live to remember any thing."

"What do you mean to do, mother?" asked Annie.

"Wait, and be silent, and you will see."

The Wise Woman stepped to the door of the lodge, and directed one of the guards to inform Minnenund and the chief men of the village that she desired to speak with them at once upon a matter of the greatest importance.

This was a summons that Minnenund never disregarded. He came speedily to the lodge, with the principal old men of the village, and entered the room in which the Wise Woman was seated, with her face free from paint or stain, dressed in

the garments which she had worn when she was captured, and bearing on her radiant face the wild and weird expression of a true prophetess.

"Why has the Wing Woman sent for us?" asked Minnemoose, when he and his companions had seated themselves. "The Long-Runner has told us, with a great many men, and they will soon enter the village, and will kill us, with our women and children, unless we fly to the north. We have nothing to lose; but must do quickly what we have to do. Has the Great Spirit been talking to my sister? If he has, let her speak in few words."

"I cannot yet have said for Minnemoose and these wise old men, as I had thought it possible that I would waste a moment of their time," replied the prophetess, rising and facing her audience. "But I have a message to them, which must be said. I have never spoken falsely to you, and you know that you can believe my words. The Great Spirit has appeared to me this night. He came in the form of a serpent, and sat upon this rock, and spoke to me in these words:

"O, woman, the Great Spirit has seen your face, and he bids you say to them that you may speak good words to the white men who are coming here; and tell my red children of the Long-Runner that they must not leave their villages and their families. Let them not be afraid of the white men; for they will not be harmed if they remain quietly at their homes. But, if they leave their villages, if they attempt to fly, or if they leave their families without the white men, a storm and terrible destruction will come upon their tribes. If any go away, they will die; but all who remain shall be safe. Let my red children hear my words and obey them, and they may live."

The prophetess ceased speaking, and bowed her head upon her breast, as if she were weeping at her solitude, in awe and amazement. The great men who were seated in a semicircle about her, with wonder, for they could not doubt that it had been thus, and supposed, as it was not possible that the wing woman would have so much as a fiction. Minnemoose was the first to break the silence.

"That is strange words," he said. "Is my sister sure that they come from the Great Spirit?"

"I have spoken," replied the Wise Woman, without raising her head.

"My sister has told us many things," continued Minnecund, addressing himself to the Indians, "and she has never spoken falsely. We have sometimes thought that she might be deceiving us; but we had only to wait to know that her words were true. The message that she has just given us could not have come from her own heart, but must have been told to her by the Great Spirit. He has spoken to his children, and they must obey him, or they will be destroyed."

The sentiments of Minnecund were silently assented to by the other old men, and the Indians, after a brief consultation among themselves, bent the lodge to stop the preparations for flight.

"I do not understand this," said Annie, when she was again alone with her mother. "Was it the truth that you told the Indians?"

"Ask me no questions, my child, but try to get some rest," replied the Wise Woman. "You are safe, and you will soon be restored to your father and your lover."

"But you, mother?"

"Have no fear for me. We are all in the hands of Providence."

There was another commotion in the village, when the communication of the Wise Woman was made known, and when Minnecund and the principal old men declared their intention of obeying the commands that purported to have come through her from the Great Spirit. Oawco, and the band of young men who followed his leadership, broke out into open rebellion, and refused to be bound by the conclusions of their elders. They called the prophets an impostor and a liar, and did not hesitate to stigmatize Minnecund and the other chiefs as a parcel of silly old women, who were being led to their destruction by a false-hearted white squaw. Commands and remonstrances were of no avail, and they went off in a body, taking their own women and children, and such others as would accompany them.

Oawco was extremely anxious to get possession of Annie Lee, in order that he might carry her with him in his flight. For that purpose he used both stratagem and force; but

was successfully repulsed by Minnemaun, who strengthened the guard around the Wise Woman's lodge, and defended it with his own presence.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CATASTROPHE—CONCLUSION.

It was about ten o'clock in the morning when Colonel Brodhead's little army entered the village. Their surprise was great indeed when they saw that the Indians had not fled before them, and were not disposed to make any hostile demonstrations toward them. On the contrary, all the old men, together with most of the women and children and a number of young warriors, came out to meet them, making signs of friendship, and asking for peace.

The two Warriors, with Colonel Lee and George Wetherell, who was carried on a litter, were in the advance, and were met by Annie Lee and her mother who had gone forth with Minnemaun. The joy of Annie knew no limits, and there was no other trace in her cup of happiness, while her mother, although calmly and serenely happy, wore an anxious look, as if fearful that her troubles were not yet ended.

The movement of the Delawares by the victorious white men proved to be exactly such as the prophets had predicted; though the result of the prediction was probably caused by the prediction itself. The soldiers, finding themselves surrounded by a peaceful and unresisting people, who were apparently friendly and well-disposed, were in a measure disarmed. Strongly as many of them desired to execute vengeance upon the Indians who had devastated their own homes and slaughtered their own relatives, they could not find it in their hearts to commence an indiscriminate massacre of these peaceful and brave Indians, who seemed to rely so confidently on their immunity and protection.

The mercy of these savages was partly owing, also, to Mrs. Lee having, when she was in attendance to the feet of these warriors, and her husband in captivity, had told her story to her husband and George Wetherell, in the presence of the commander of the force. Colonel Brodhead, considering that she

had made promises which ought to be kept, and wishing to curb the bloodthirsty disposition of some of his men, issued strict orders to the effect that the Indians should not be maltreated, and detailed a camp-guard to see that the order was complied with.

Many of the volunteers were greatly dissatisfied with this condition of affairs, as they had joined the expedition for the purpose of retaliating upon the Indians for the crimes they had committed in the white settlements, and they were not at all pleased at losing such a fine opportunity to take scalps. They contented themselves, however, with discontented muttering and grumblings, until an incident occurred which changed the face of affairs.

The day was drawing toward its close, when it was reported to the commander that a Delaware chief had presented himself to one of the pickets that were stationed around the camp, representing himself as having been sent, by a portion of his tribe, to treat for peace.

Levi Wetzel, inwardly wishing that he had been the picket, in which case there would have been no report to make, declared that the Indian was a spy, and advised that he should not be received; but the commander, less vindictive than the Indian Slayer, ordered that the messenger should be admitted to his presence.

Colonel Lee and his restored wife were at the quarters of Colonel Brothwell when the chief was announced, who proved to be no other than Owassa. The young avenger was excited in his gayer and phrenzied, was painted as if for war, and carried in his belt a pipe and a tomahawk. When he had seated himself, he lighted his pipe, and handed it to Colonel Brothwell, who smoked a few whiffs and returned it to him, telling him to make known for what purpose he had come.

"I have come to speak of peace," answered Owassa, rising. "I have come to see for myself whether there really is peace, or whether a false tongue has lied to us. My people have made war upon the white men. We have slain no man, and have asked none. We did not believe that there could be peace between us and the white men. When the Long-knives came out against us in great numbers, we prepared to fly to-

ward the north; but we were restrained by the voice of a white woman, who said that she had received a message from the Great Spirit, and that he commanded us to stay. Those who remained, she said, would be saved; those who went away should be destroyed. There were those who believed her words; there were others who did not. Those who did not believe fled from before the white men, and I was their leader. I have come back to see whether the words of this Wise Woman were true. I see that those of my people who remained are still alive. There seems to be peace between them and the white men. But what sort of a peace is this, and how long will it last? I have heard the warriors of the Long-knives say, while I have been here, that they mean to kill every red-man they take, and I believe them. Blood is in their hearts, and it will soon redden their tomahawks and their knives. My people must perish. If they do not die to-day, they will die to-morrow; if not to-morrow, then the next day. Owaco has nothing to live for, and he cares for nothing now except for revenge on the false tongue that has betrayed his people into the hands of the white men, and that he will have before he dies."

The young sachem turned with the quickness of lightning, and, before a hand could be raised to stay him, buried his tomahawk in the brain of Mrs. Lee, who fell without a murmur. The next instant the murderer was slain by the sharp ax of Lewis Wetzel, who had been standing behind him.

Brandishing his bloody tomahawk, the Indian Slayer rushed out, proclaiming what had happened, and giving the signal for a general massacre. The work commenced, and many of the Indians, unable to resist, were slaughtered in cold blood, before a stop could be put to the carnage. Minnenund received his death-blow calmly, with his last breath declaring his belief and confidence in the Wise Woman. Owaco had raised his hand against the whites, he said, and thus her prediction had been fulfilled.

Colonel Brodhead did not attempt to advance any further, as there was a "gathering of the clans" among the savages, who came down upon him in such force that he was compelled to beat a hasty retreat back to the Ohio. Those of the Indians who had not been slaughtered, after the death of Mrs.

Lee, were carried off as prisoners; but all were massacred during the march, with the exception of a few women and children.

Colonel Lee was obliged to bury his wife near the site of the Indian village, as the nature of the retreat would not permit him to carry her remains to Virginia. George Wetherell was forced to give up his litter and mount a horse; but the presence of Annie Lee was a good balm for his wound, which daily grew better, notwithstanding the rough traveling.

In course of time the expedition arrived, without serious loss, at Fort Henry, where Colonel Lee remained for a time, with his daughter and Wetherell, to rest and recruit their strength, and then returned to their former residence in North Carolina. George Wetherell and Annie were formally betrothed, but were not married until peace was declared with Great Britain, some two years thereafter.

Oneola accompanied the expedition to Virginia as a prisoner, and consented to go to North Carolina with Annie. Amid the scenes of civilization she soon drooped and died, although most tenderly and affectionately treated, and was buried far from the graves of her race.

The Wetzel brothers continued their vocation of hunting and killing Indians, until the close of the war compelled them to abandon it, when they reluctantly resigned themselves to peaceful pursuits.

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